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An analysis of the reception and appropriation of the Bible by Manobo Christians in Central Mindanao, Philippines

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed: _____

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Wilson McMahon
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Abstract

An analysis of the reception and appropriation of the Bible by Manobo Christians in Central Mindanao, Philippines

This thesis is an attempt to make visible how Christians within a minority people in the southern Philippines view the Bible conceptually as a source of spiritual authority and also how they read and interpret the Bible, both privately and within the context of community worship. Reading and studying the Bible is now universally practised by people from multitudes of cultures, a reality that has naturally engendered a great deal of interest on the part of scholars. The resultant scholarship however, has been preoccupied with the findings of the professional researcher, and little has been published which reveals how "ordinary indigenous readers" view the Bible and/or how they interpret it. Using qualitative data gathered by this author among Manobo Christians living in the hills of central Mindanao, this thesis will endeavour to redress this imbalance and provide access to the voices of ordinary Manobo readers. The thesis also makes an important contribution to the Bible's place within Philippine Christianity. Despite the expanding readership of the Bible within the Philippines almost no research has focused on how the Bible is actually interpreted by ordinary readers.

The thesis will major on the appropriation of the Bible by Christians from within the Manobo Bible Church Association of Mindanao, an association of churches born out of the church planting efforts of missionaries belonging to the Overseas Missionary Fellowship. At the centre of the thesis is an encounter between conservative evangelical missionaries and the unique culture and cosmology of the Manobo. The central argument is that the missionaries' prototypically, evangelical doctrine of Scripture was appropriated and reconfigured by Manobo Christians in ways that reveal the persistent ability of elements of their own cosmology, and customary law, to exert influence upon their localisation of Christianity. In particular, the thesis focuses on how the localisation process has led to innovations by the Manobo on what is meant by the Bible as "spiritual authority" and to reinterpretations of significant theological themes within the evangelical gospel message. At the same time the thesis also outlines how adoption of the Christian Scriptures has redefined the position that indigenous sources of authority, such as spirit priest and village chief, now occupy within Manobo Christian communities.

Lay Summary of Thesis

An analysis of the reception and appropriation of the Bible by Manobo Christians in Central Mindanao, Philippines

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how Christians, within a minority people in the southern Philippines, view the Bible conceptually as a source of spiritual authority and also how they read and interpret the Bible, both privately and within the context of community worship. Reading and studying the Bible is now a universal phenomenon, resulting from the expansion of Christianity through the efforts of the Christian missionary movement. This in turn has made it an attractive topic for study by academics. The resultant scholarship however, has been preoccupied with the findings of the professional researcher, and little has been published which reveals how "ordinary indigenous readers" view the Bible and/or how they interpret it. Using qualitative data gathered by this author among Manobo Christians living in the hills of central Mindanao, this thesis will endeavour to redress this imbalance and make available to readers how ordinary Manobo Christians are interacting with the Bible and how they are interpreting it. The thesis also makes an important contribution to the Bible's place within Philippine Christianity. Despite the expanding readership of the Bible within the Philippines almost no research has focused on the results of ordinary Christians' engagement with the bible.

The thesis will major on the appropriation of the Bible by Christians from within the Manobo Bible Church Association of Mindanao, an association of churches born out of the church planting efforts of missionaries belonging to the Overseas Missionary Fellowship. At the centre of the thesis is an encounter between conservative evangelical missionaries and the unique culture and cosmology of the Manobo. The central argument is that this encounter issued in a number of changes. The missionaries' evangelical doctrine of Scripture was received and then reconfigured by Manobo Christians. The nature of the changes reveal that, despite conversion to Christianity, deeply rooted elements of Manobo culture and cosmology are alive and well in the Manobo religious consciousness and these have shaped, and continue to shape, Manobo Christians relationship with the Bible. In particular, the thesis focuses on how the process has led to a Manobo concept of the Bible as "spiritual authority" that does not correspond with how pioneering missionaries would have understood that term. The same can be said for significant theological themes within the missionaries' gospel message; these have also undergone change and been reinterpreted by Manobo Christians. At the same time the thesis also outlines how adoption of the Christian Scriptures has redefined the position that indigenous sources of authority, such as spirit priest and village chief, now occupy within Manobo Christian communities.

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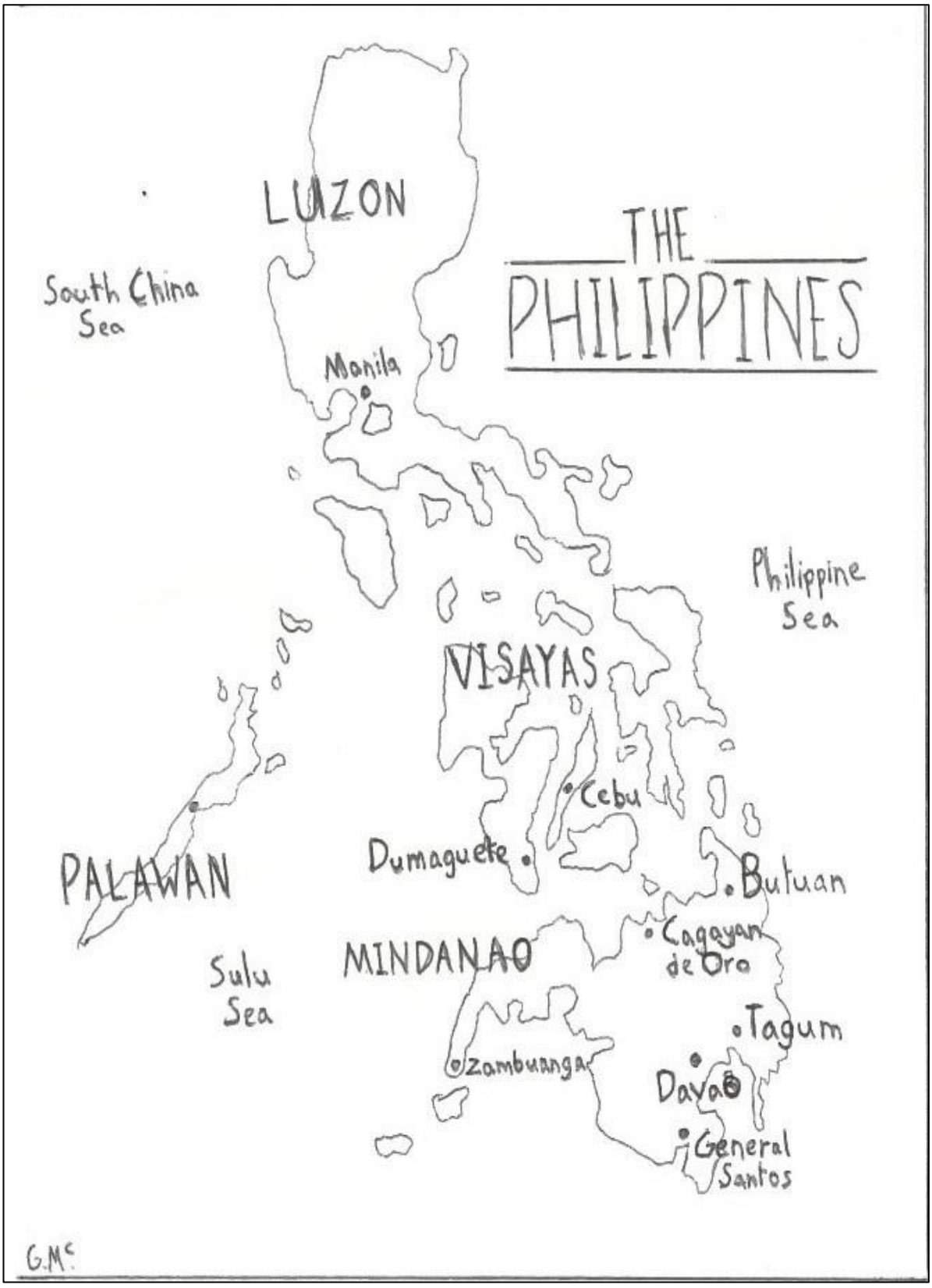

Figure 1 Map of the Philippines

Chapter One. Introduction

Listening to the Ordinary Reader[1]

> "This project is one of several in recent years that have sought to deal with a startling development in religion in general and the Christian religion in particular: the emergence of the Bible as a global phenomenon . . . Such spread, presence and use of the Bible throughout the world, especially in the non-Western world, has been a result of the growth and expansion of Christianity from the end of the nineteenth century and through the course of the twentieth. The global Bible is thus a consequence of the enormous success of the Christian missionary movement and the underlying vision of the "Christian Century.""[2]

Fernando Segovia's statement, while written to explain the importance of the Intercultural Bible Reading Project, also makes a case for the usefulness of this thesis, which is to examine the Bible's place within the Christianity practised by an indigenous people group in the southern Philippines. The Bible has not just followed the global expansion of Christianity but has, in fact, been central to the message of the gospel conveyed – by Protestant missions at least – in the past 200 years. In turn, it is now central to the lives of the majority of Christians in the Global South, a reality which has prompted another book from the pen of Philip Jenkins wherein he examines the implications for western Christians' understanding of the Bible from how it is read in this part of the world.[3]

It should not surprise us that the Bible's ubiquity within World Christianity has drawn the attention of scholars and led to studies designed to make room for multiethnic readings and interpretations of the Bible from across the world, and

[1] I first encountered the term, "ordinary indigenous reader" in Gerald O. West, "Local Is Lekker, but Ubuntu Is Best: Indigenous Reading Resources from a South African Perspective," in *Vernacular Hermeneutics*, ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 37-38.
[2] Fernando F. Segovia, "Intercultural Bible Reading as Transformation for Liberation: Intercultural Hermeneutics and Biblical Studies," in *Bible and Transformation: The Promise of Intercultural Bible Reading*, ed. Hans De Wit and Janet Dyk (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 29-30. This volume is a report on the Intercultural Bible Reading Project directed by Hans de Wit and his colleagues at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
[3] Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

which also suggest new paradigms for interpretation based on the unique contexts of Christians in the Global South.[4] What needs to be borne in mind, however, is that most of what is published around the theme of multicultural hermeneutics has been written by scholars who already swim within the currents of academia. Jason Carter, in his recently published African-focused study, highlights this very conundrum. He makes the point that though there is an expanding interest in studying Africans' engagement with the Scriptures,

> "The tendency still remains for scholarly voices to dominate the conversation. Grassroots interpretations of the Bible which have sustained the vibrant expansion of the Christian faith all across sub-Saharan Africa remain largely unexplored academic territory."[5]

This author's thesis has an Asian focus and within this continent, the state of affairs around study of the Bible's interpretation, and its position as a source of spiritual authority, closely resembles that of Africa. In 1994, an issue of the journal *Biblical Interpretation* was devoted to the subject of "Asian Biblical Hermeneutics". The contributing scholars to this edition summarised Asian hermeneutics as a discipline that interacts with established Asian religious texts,[6] prioritises liberation from dehumanizing forces such as poverty and gender abuse,[7] and favours a pluralism of

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[4] Craig Keener and M. Daniel Carroll R., eds., *Global Voices: Reading the Bible in the Majority World* (Massachusetts: Hendriksen Publishers, 2013). Daniel M. Patte, ed. *The Global Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004). Heike Raisanen et al, *Reading the Bible in the Global Village* (Atlanta: SBL, 2000). R.S. Sugirtharajah, ed. *Vernacular Hermeneutics*, vol. 2, The Bible and Postcolonialism (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

[5] Jason A. Carter, *Inside the Whirlwind: The Book of Job through African Eyes* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 14. Carter does however draw attention to the work of David Tuesday Adamo as an exception to this pattern. Cf. David Tuesday Adamo, *Reading and Interpreting the Bible in African Indigenous Churches* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf, 2001), referenced in Carter, page 14, n. 4. African scholar John Mbiti, in his review of the highly acclaimed work, *The Bible in Africa*, remarks that in reading the book he missed "an attempt to listen to the voices of Christians who cannot read, and those who do not publish. Yet, the Bible is present among them and exerts a degree of influence upon their lives. Theirs is often an oral theology without footnotes." John S. Mbiti, "A Review of *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*", *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 367 (2003): 619.

[6] R.S. Sugirtharajah, "Introduction, and Some Thoughts on Asian Biblical Hermeneutics," *Biblical Interpretation* 2, no. 3 (1994): 257-58.

[7] Hisako Kinukawa, "The Story of the [Hemorrhaging] Woman (Mark 5:25-34) Read from a Japanese Feminist Context," *Biblical Interpretation* 2, no. 3 (1994): 283-93.

texts as opposed to the sole authority of the Christian Bible.[8] In addition, there was a sometimes explicitly, sometimes tacitly acknowledged, conviction that if Asian hermeneutics are to flourish they need to be liberated from the western "historical critical method" of interpretation.[9] All the articles were written by established, professional, Asian scholars, employing postcolonial criticism to texts, with no space for the voice of ordinary indigenous readers, an omission that did not go unnoticed by one of the respondents who remarked, "What cannot be escaped, though, is the fact that all of them speak out of and express the values of the privileged sectors of their communities of origin."[10] It is this tendency in Asia, as in Africa, to privilege the voice of the academy that is liable to produce a less-than-candid analysis of how Asian Christians actually do understand the Bible conceptually and what their hermeneutical methods might be. This is an issue taken up by Simon Chan who laments that too much Asian theology "ignores the views of the ordinary people themselves," and that though "Elite theologians may theologize about the poor and the oppressed . . . such a theology is not likely to find much traction among the poor themselves."[11]

In addition to the lopsided notion of Asian hermeneutics arrived at by only paying attention to the writings of academics is the difficulty posed by the use of the modifier "Asian". Soares-Prabhu acknowledges that Asia is "an extraordinarily complex and differentiated society" and that an awareness of this should prevent a

[8] S.J. Samartha, "Religion, Language and Reality," *Biblical Interpretation* 2, no. 3 (1994): 340-62. This edition of BI contains seven articles and four responses. I have only referenced three in this summary in an effort to conserve space. The three themes listed in my summary can also be read from the other articles within this particular edition of BI.
[9] George M. Soares-Prabhu, "Two Mission Commands," I *Biblical Interpretation* 2, no. 3 (1994): 264.
[10] Sharon H. Ringe, "Asian Readings of the Bible: A North American Feminist Response," *Biblical Interpretation* 2, no. 3 (1994): 375.
[11] Simon Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology: Thinking the Faith from the Ground Up* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2014), 27. Jenkins notes a similar tendency in books by writers from the global south published in the United States; "Only a handful give any inkling of the vast popular interest in themes of healing, spiritual warfare and exorcism, of mission and evangelism, topics that occupy much of the daily attention of African and Asian believers." Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity,* 7-8.

striving after an "all-purpose Asian method of interpreting the Bible."[12] This awareness of the dizzying diversity of Asia has already led to scholars within World Christianity preferring to write about "Asia's Christianities," for even though there may be commonality among Asia's Christians by way of fidelity to Jesus Christ and his church, Christianity is "localised" across Asia in a multiplicity of ways that corresponds with the continent's multitude of contexts.[13] Biblical interpretation in Asia stands in a place analogous to that of Christianity. It has been, and is being, localised by ordinary readers and rooted in the contexts of those who have access to the Bible.

In short, this thesis is an attempt to respond to the situation outlined above by focusing on the localisation of Christianity by the Manobo of central Mindanao, Philippines. By collating the opinions of members of the Manobo Bible Church Association of Mindanao (MABCAM), and the taught messages of lay leaders, the thesis will endeavour to make visible how these Manobo Christians, as ordinary indigenous readers, have appropriated the central text of Christianity from its missionary conveyors. The thesis will ask if the Manobo reception of the Bible has produced a peculiarly Manobo conception of the Bible as "spiritual authority" and if the same process has also shaped a recognisable "Manobo Christian hermeneutic", that differs from that of the foreign missionary evangelists who first introduced the Bible to the Manobo in the mid-1970s, and whose influence upon Manobo Christianity continues until today. Such an enterprise is, after all, nothing more than what Peter Phan argues is one of the core tasks of World Christianity. Borrowing terminology from Justo González, Phan argues that World Christianity must expand the "cartography" and the "topography" of the history of Christianity. While expanding the cartography means to study geographical regions heretofore

[12] Soares-Prabhu, *Two Mission Commands,* 271-72.
[13] Peter C. Phan, "Introduction: Asian Christianity/Christianities," in *Christianities in Asia*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

neglected, expanding the topography means paying attention to the heretofore "marginalised in church history such as lay men and women, religious sisters, the poor, the tribal," and focusing on how these "have appropriated and thus transformed the transmitted Christianity (Christianity as an import) to produce new, indigenous Christianities."[14]

Subsidiary Themes

If the central purpose of this thesis is to analyse how the Bible has been received and appropriated by Manobo Christians, it is inevitable that important subsidiary themes and questions are developed and answered along the way which are pertinent to the study of World Christianity.

Reception and Appropriation

This thesis is less concerned with the broader picture of Christianity's appropriation by the Manobo, and more focused on their reception of the Bible. Narrowing our focus further, the thesis inspects the appropriation of a Bible brought to the Manobo by foreign missionaries who can be placed firmly within the evangelical/fundamentalist sector of the modern missionary movement. The missionaries who pioneered evangelism among the Manobo were members of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF), a mission agency that would be considered as conservative evangelical in the United Kingdom and in the United States.[15]

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[14] Peter Phan, "World Christianity: Its Implications for History, Religious Studies, and Theology," *Horizons* 39, no. 2 (2012): 178.

[15] Referring to organisations in 1960s' Britain that were of benefit to the cause of Conservative Evangelicalism, David Bebbington makes mention of OMF saying, "By their networks of officials, missionaries, literature and meetings they reinforced the zeal of conservative Christians." D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London; Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 258. In the 1970s, when OMF began church planting among the Manobo, the popularity of OMF as a sending mission among those who graduated from North American Bible schools means the label "Fundamentalist" would also have been an appropriate moniker for the organisation. For a definitive study on the origins and values of the Bible School movement within the United States, see Virginia Lieson Brereton, *Training God's Army : The American Bible School, 1880-1940* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 17-20.

Missionaries from this sector within American Christianity numerically dominated the North American overseas mission workforce by 1976, when OMF members were beginning mission to the Manobo.[16] The majority of those who pioneered church planting among the Manobo were graduates from schools affiliated with the Bible School movement in the United States, a movement that was unashamedly fundamentalist in its ethos.[17] Missionaries from within the evangelical/fundamentalist network of churches and agencies represented a distinct position on the authority of the Bible, characterised by a commitment to the doctrines of biblical inerrancy and/or infallibility; a commitment shaped by American evangelical Christians' battle over what they viewed as the corrosive effects of secularisation upon the American way of life in the first half of the twentieth century.[18] It goes without saying that the encounter of an oral society like that of the Manobo with the finely honed biblicism of western missionaries should reveal a localisation of Christianity with some unique features that connect with the core interests of studies in World Christianity.

Firstly, from the perspective of the evangelical missionaries, Manobo converts' reception of the Bible did not always comply with missionary assumptions about Scripture or about how the Bible was functioning within Manobo Christianity. This is of vital importance, because missionaries tended to operate with a high degree of

[16] In the 1930s evangelicals/fundamentalists accounted for one out of every seven North American Protestant missionaries. Cf. Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 29. By 1976 they accounted for ten out of every twelve. Robert T. Coote, "The Uneven Growth of Conservative Evangelical Missions," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 6, no. 3 (1982): 120.

[17] Within the first ten years of church planting among the Manobo, twenty OMF missionaries had been involved in evangelism and church planting among the Manobo. Twelve of these were from North America and had all been trained at schools with statements of faith that placed them, doctrinally speaking, firmly within the Bible School movement. Eight of the twelve had graduated from Prairie Bible Institute in Alberta, Canada.

[18] Carpenter, *Revive Us Again,* 5-7. Those from North America would most likely have been more comfortable with the term "inerrancy." Those from Britain, Europe, South Africa and Australia would probably have preferred to use the term "infallibility." The significance of these terms will be dealt with in chapter five.

confidence that the authority of the Bible, as they perceived it, and the irrefutable importance of the doctrines they read from the text of the Bible, were being uncritically adopted by the Manobo individuals they watched become Christian in response to their message. This thesis examines these missionary assumptions and concludes that Manobo Christians affirm the missionary premises while at the same time reconfiguring and reshaping them in accordance with their own needs and context. With regards to biblical authority, this thesis will show that even as they declare fidelity to this doctrine, Manobo Christians put it to work in ways never contemplated by missionaries, making the Bible function as a signifier of modernity and as a source of material power.

A word needs to be said about the use of the term modernity here. In its most optimistic versions, modernity refers to a concept which Webb Keane describes as having two distinct features: "rupture from a traditional past and progress into a better future." This better future involves the material benefits of modern life but also personal transformation through the restoration of agency to people, and away from illegitimate rulers and/or deities, thus leading to greater individual autonomy.[19] It is this desire for future progress through rupture with the past that is meant when modernity is referred to in this thesis, in connection with the Bible's appropriation by Manobo as spiritual authority.

Even as Manobo Christians admit the Bible as having superseded the authority of spirit world and customary law they gently resist the missionary stance which equates the entirety of their spirit world with the "demons" of the New Testament. With regards to missionary assumptions about key theological themes such as the 'death of Christ', the 'character of God' and 'Christian ethics/lifestyle', this thesis reveals that MABCAM members interpret these in ways unexpected by the missionary conveyors of the Bible, preferring the death of Christ as exemplar to that of atoning sacrifice; the character of God as humble, kind, loving and generous to

[19] Webb Keane, *Christian Moderns: freedom and fetish in the mission encounter* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 48-51.

that of holy, righteous and sovereign; and preferring to read a Christian lifestyle of mutual forgiveness, generosity and kindness as a response to the gospel over against an acknowledgment of sin and the abstract concept of “faith” in Christ.

This thesis will seek to unravel the sociopolitical and cultural factors that have given shape to this distinctive interpretation of biblical authority and unique hermeneutic. The sociopolitical factors materialised from the huge upheavals sustained by Manobo communities in the wake of President Ferdinand Marcos’ (1965-1986) economic policies in Mindanao. The cultural factors are of substantial importance to the study of missions in general, in light of the substantive role that cosmology and traditional law contribute to the forming of Manobo Christian notions of biblical authority and interpretation. OMF missionaries interpreted Manobo cosmology using a Christian theodicy that categorised all beings within the Manobo spirit world as “demons” or “dark powers.” This inevitably led to a negative theological assessment of Manobo cosmology as being of apiece with the Devil’s domain. This thesis presents the Manobo spirit world in much more nuanced terms, suggesting that there is a discernible ethic at the nexus of human/spirit relationships which makes its own contribution to how Manobo Christians conceive and interpret the Bible. Since evangelical missions have, in general, held an opinion on the indigenous spirit world that correlates with that of OMF missionaries, practitioners from these agencies have rarely, if ever, considered the possibility that there are positive elements within these cosmologies that might contribute to biblical interpretation or help shape Christian lifestyle. Nowadays, evangelical missiologists are unlikely to brand indigenous spirit world beliefs as “superstition” and tend to accept indigenous cosmologies as spiritual realities that need to be taken seriously.

Nevertheless, the predominant tendency is still to interpret these cosmologies negatively as equivalent to the world of evil spirits within Christian theology.[20]

Secondly, this thesis confirms what has more recently been affirmed by researchers within the comparatively new but rapidly expanding field of the anthropology of Christianity, that Christianity is inescapably cultural in its particular expressions. This is not always considered an acceptable norm. One of the earliest exponents of the anthropology of Christianity, Susan Harding, in her ethnographic studies involving American Protestant fundamentalists, discovered that commonplace theoretical tools in studies of culture were routinely not applied to American fundamentalists. She concluded that anti-orientalising tools of cultural criticism, which are routinely employed for those who have been "constituted by discourses of race/sex/class/ ethnicity/colonialism, are not so employed for the Christian religion," and that there was a tendency among modern academics to "turn all born-again believers into aberrant, usually backward or hoodwinked, versions of modern subjects."[21] However, as Brian Howell concluded from his research into Baptist congregations in the Philippines, locality is in fact "created (interpreted, experienced, and negotiated) through the practice of Christianity." "Context," says Howell, "is both the product and the location of these Baptist congregations."[22] This thesis will present Manobo Christians as those who created new cultural space through conversion to evangelical Christianity at a time when Mindanao was in the throes of social upheaval and dislocation, brought on by the policies of the Marcos administration in the 1970s and 1980s.

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[20] For an example of this theological interpretation of indigenous beliefs, see A. Scott Moreau *et al, Deliver Us from Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission* (Monrovia: Marc, 2002).
[21] Susan Harding, "Representing Fundamentalism: The Problem of the Repugnant Cultural Other," *Social Research* 58, no. 2 (1991): 374-75.
[22] Brian M. Howell, *Christianity in the Local Context: Southern Baptists in the Philippines* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 5-6.

Thirdly, this study also touches on an attitude evident in the writings of some researchers, described by Joel Robbins, another leading scholar in the anthropology of Christianity, as "a widespread tendency among anthropologists to recoil from hybrid cultures; a tendency nourished by the ideas of cultural authenticity."[23] Michael Harkin, in his book on the Heiltsuks, remarks that this phenomenon, the adoption of elements of one culture by another, has "traditionally been organised around the concept of *loss* in the anthropological literature." He goes on to say that this process of loss is often seen as a "corollary of native passivity," a view, according to Harkin, which "coincides with an often romantic notion of the richness of a traditional past as well as a devaluation of the contemporary society."[24] This sensitivity to "cultural loss" has led to a tendency among some students of indigenous oral cultures to react negatively to the intrusion of texts into such environments. The introduction of text is caricatured as a manoeuvre that engenders loss within oral cultures; it is considered symptomatic of scriptocentrism, an attitude that presupposes the superiority of the written text over the unwritten.[25] However, as with the issue above, of Christianity being cultural, there is a body of competent scholarship that does not accept concepts like "cultural loss," or "native passivity" as inevitable products of the interface of indigenous cultures with Christianity. Joel Cabrita, in her study of the Nazaretha Church of South Africa, is critical of what she describes as a, "Well-established scholarly tradition of treating independent churches as expressive of an authentic African religiosity . . . rather

[23] Joel Robbins, *Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society* (Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press, 2004), 29.
[24] Michael E. Harkin, *The Heiltsuks: Dialogues of Culture and History on the Northwest Coast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 47.
[25] R.S. Sugirtharajah in particular is critical of this use of the Bible in the colonial era. He describes it as "a privileging of the written word over the oral, thereby overlooking the fact that in some cultures hearing, memorizing, and performing are seen as sufficient." R.S. Sugirtharajah, "Bible: Asia," in *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*, ed. Virginia Fabella and R.S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 20.

than as Bible-reading innovators shaped by global currents of evangelical thought and practice."[26]

Birgit Meyer also insists that it is much more fruitful to study Christianity in Africa as a dynamic field in which the African Independent Churches, mainline churches and indigenous religion are in ongoing exchange, conflict and dialogue with each other.[27] The same dynamic process can be observed in the Manobo Christians' appropriation of the Bible. In particular, this thesis focuses on how the localisation process has led to innovations by the Manobo in relation to what is meant by the Bible as "spiritual authority" and to reinterpretations of significant theological themes within the evangelical message. At the same time the thesis also outlines how adoption of the Christian Scriptures has redefined the position that indigenous sources of authority, such as spirit priest and village chief, now occupy within Manobo Christian communities.

Bible Translation

"Mother tongue Scripture has a fundamental place in the engagement of gospel and culture. . . . Our mother tongue is the language in which God speaks to each of us," wrote the Ghanaian theologian Kwame Bediako.[28] Since the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804, it has been an accepted maxim of evangelical missions that translations of the Bible into the mother tongue are an essential prerequisite for successful evangelism and the accompanying task of instructing and strengthening new believers. This maxim developed into a movement with a full head of steam at the founding of the Wycliffe Bible Translators-Summer Institute of Linguistics (WBT-SIL) in 1942, a dual organisation

[26] Joel Cabrita, *Text and Authority in the South African Nazaretha Church* (London & NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 5.
[27] Birgit Meyer, "Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-CharismaticChurches," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 450.
[28] Kwame Bediako, "Scripture as the Interpreter of Culture and Tradition," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Nairobi: Word Alive Publishers, 2006), 4.

that was committed to "a strongly held belief that the translated scriptures were the lynchpin in a missionary program that would result in self-replicating and self-governing indigenous churches."[29] The Gambian scholar Lamin Sanneh has also reinforced the benefits of translation by pointing out how Africans viewed vernacular translations of the Bible as the "divine imprimatur on their cultures," a dynamic that opened up new social and political opportunities.[30] This thesis provides an opportunity to scrutinise the veracity of the "translation theory" and the claims of Sanneh, by allowing us to examine whether indigenous language translations were indeed a critical factor in the Manobos' appropriation of the Bible, and its reception by other *Lumad* Christian communities on Mindanao.[31] With regards to the latter, i.e. other *Lumad* people out-with the survey population of this thesis, the author interviewed translators and church leaders from other *Lumad* church groupings on the island, and gathered data on the use of the vernacular Bible within these communities. This has provided for a more comprehensive treatment of the subject in chapter four, by allowing us to make a more general assessment about the use of mother-tongue Scriptures among *Lumads* throughout the island.

Providing a critique of the theories of Sanneh and others is important in light of a number of factors. Firstly, SIL developed a substantial presence in the Philippines in

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[29] Frederick A. Aldridge Jr., *All Things to All Men for the Gospel's Sake: The Wycliffe Bible Translators and Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1934-1982* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, forthcoming in 2018). Hereafter I will generally refer to WBT-SIL as SIL, unless the context demands otherwise. This is how the organisation has always self-referenced in the Philippines.

[30] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact of Culture*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2008), 193, 209.

[31] The term "*Lumad*" is a word which refers to the indigenous, non-Muslim peoples of Mindanao. It is a "Cebuano" word meaning "born from the earth" and was adopted as a term of self-designation by a large group of "tribal" leaders in 1986. Cf. William Larousse, *A Local Church Living for Dialogue: Muslim-Christian Relations in Mindanao-Sulu, Philippines: 1965-2000* (Rome: Gregorian Press, 2001), 18, n. 26. Despite its relatively recent choice as a term for Mindanao's non-Muslim, indigenous peoples, Oona Paredes argues for its usefulness because of the lack of an already established term for this category of people. Cf. Oona Paredes, *A Mountain of Difference: The Lumad in Early Colonial Mindanao* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2013), 24-25.

the early 1950s and committed significant resources and a large workforce to the task of translating Scripture into the indigenous languages of Mindanao.[32] Secondly, the Manobos' linguistic context differs radically from that which preoccupied Sanneh. Sanneh focuses on the revolutionary effects of translating the Bible into African vernaculars rather than forcing local Christians to make do with the Scriptures in a colonial language. The second language option that Manobo Christians are increasingly favouring above their mother-tongue is Cebuano, another Philippine language which comes with no colonial baggage attached, is closely related to Manobo and easy to learn, and which offers Manobo the promise of prestige and progress in the modern world. Thirdly, the claims that all speakers of minority languages acknowledge a need for having the Bible in their language[33] and that all multilingual speakers have a better understanding of the Bible if they can read it in their heart language have recently been called into question.[34]

Placing the Study within the Context of Christianity in the Philippines

This thesis provides opportunity for expanding our understanding of Christian missionary engagement with the indigenous *Lumad* populations of Mindanao. Missionary religious from the Catholic order of the Augustinian Recollects were the dominant missionary presence in Mindanao during the Spanish era, arriving on the

[32] Arthur Lynip, *Richard S. Pittman: Sil Statesman Linguist and the Asia-Pacific Rim of Fire* (Manila: SIL Philippines, 2013), 30-34.
[33] William A. Smalley, *Translation as Mission: Bible Translation in the Modern Missionary Movement*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk, The Modern Mission Era, 1792-1992: An Appraisal (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1991), 140.
[34] Kenneth Nehrbass, "Do Multilingual Speakers Understand the Bible Best in Their Heart Language? A Tool for Comparing Comprehension of Translations in Vernacular Languages and Languages of Wider Communication," *The Bible Translator* 65, no. 1 (2014): 88-103. See also John Parratt, "A Review of *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of an Non-Western Religion,* by Kwame Bediako. Edinburgh: (Edinburgh University Press, 1995)," *International Review of Mission* LXXXVI, no. 340/341 (1997): 157-159. Parratt is heavily critical of Bediako's acceptance of the translation theory and his assertion that events recorded in Acts chapter two give theological warrant for taking vernacular languages seriously. Parratt insists there is no evidence the early Christians used anything other than Greek or Aramaic in their preaching and writings. In other words, they used a *lingua franca.*

island in 1622 and remaining until 1867; Peter Schreurs has provided the most substantial English language account of their efforts.[35] The Jesuits were prolific writers, and information on the second period of their mission to Mindanao (1871-1898) is available in the letters of their missionary priests, published as a ten volume series from 1875 to 1897 and entitled *Cartas de los Padres de la Compañia de Jesus de la Mision de Filipinas.* Direct access to the *Cartas* is limited to those competent in Spanish but English readers do have recourse to Pablo Pastells three-volume *"Mission to Mindanao,"* which has been translated into English and is a distillation of the *Cartas'* contents.[36] Important though these sources are, they are all from the perspective of Spanish and/or Catholic writers and often are read as panegyrics to the Spanish religious who brought the gospel to Mindanao.[37]

For the Protestant engagement with Mindanao *Lumads* during the American era, primary sources are available in the form of the journals of the annual convention of the "Philippine Mission of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA", the weekly magazine of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA), known as the "Alliance Weekly", and the annual reports of the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" (ABCFM). All three of these agencies served on Mindanao during the period of American control and conducted outreach to the island's *Lumads*. In the period following World War II, though foreign Protestant missionary numbers increased, there was minimal material produced that might be useful in an analysis of the *Lumad*/missionary encounter.[38] In short, the material

[35] Peter Schreurs, *Caraga Antigua 1521-1910: The Hispanization and Christianization of Agusan, Surigao and East Davao,* (Cebu City: University of San Carlos, 1989).
[36] Pablo Pastells, *Mission to Mindanao, 1859-1900: From the Spanish of Pablo Pastells*, 3 vols. (Cebu City: San Carlos Publications, 1994).
[37] An exception to this is the more recent work by Mindanao-born scholar Oona Paredes which pays close attention to the *Lumads'* perspective on the Recollect Mission. Cf. Paredes, *A Mountain of Difference*.
[38] Two useful doctoral dissertations that analyse the mission of two American-based agencies, the C&MA and the Southern Baptist Mission are, respectively; David Lloyd Rambo, "The Christian and Missionary Alliance in the Philippines, 1901-70" (PhD Diss. New York University, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1975). John Mark Terry, "An Analysis of Growth among Southern

relating to Protestant mission, like that of missionaries from the Spanish Catholic orders, privileges the activities and voice of the missionary. The *Lumad* response, when recorded, tends to be critiqued according to how well it corresponds to missionary assumptions and expectations. [39]

This thesis will differ, therefore, from most of what has been published on Christianity in Mindanao by placing centre stage the *Lumad* response. In addition, it will maintain a tight focus on the reception of Scripture as the instrument for understanding the dynamic of the Manobo's appropriation of the Christian faith. This presents us with a double irony. Despite the centrality of Scripture for Protestantism and considering the effort by Bible translators to make Scripture available in the languages of Mindanao's indigenous peoples, there are practically no studies, published or unpublished, which examine how it is read by the people of Mindanao. We can proffer a couple of reasons for this negligence on the part of Protestant missionaries, church leaders or theologians. Firstly, it may be that these groups have generally assumed that Mindanao converts' conceptualisation of the Bible has replicated their own categories of understanding and that they have read and interpreted Scripture in accordance with what they deem to be an acceptable Protestant hermeneutic. A second, and perhaps more satisfactory, reason was the rise of the Church Growth movement within the Philippines. In the 1970s, in response to exposure to the Church Growth principles promoted by American

Baptist Churches on Mindanao, Philippines, 1951-1985." (PhD Diss. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1986).

[39] There are a couple of exceptions to this tendency. Oona Paredes published an article on the conversion to evangelical Christianity of people from one *Lumad* people group, the Higaunon. The value of this article is that it pays attention to how the message of salvation, communicated by American missionaries, resonated with elements within the Higaunon culture and psyche: Cf. Oona Thommes Paredes, "True Believers: Higaunon and Manobo Evangelical Protestant Conversion in Historical and Anthropological Perspective," *Philippine Studies* 54, no. 4 (2006). In 1973, the Jesuit Scholar Vincent Cullen wrote an article which studied the response to Christianity by the Bukidnon of central Mindanao: Cf., Vincent G. Cullen, "Bukidnon Animism and Christianity," in *Bukidnon Politics and Religion*, ed. Alfonso De Guzman II and Esther M. Pacheco IPC papers (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture of Ateneo de Manila University, 1973).

missiologist Donald McGavran, evangelical churches in the Philippines prioritised evangelism and church planting, a programme that was enthusiastically embraced by Mindanao churches.[40] The resultant effect of this preoccupation with church planting was that missiological researchers also tended to focus exclusively on investigating issues relating to church growth.[41]

If we consider the possible value of this research to Christianity within the wider Philippines' context, a study of how the Bible is conceived, read and interpreted within an indigenous community seems entirely appropriate in a nation where the Bible is owned and enthusiastically read by Catholic and Protestant Christians alike. According to statistics within the *Atlas of Global Christianity*, in 2010, 2,385 million Bibles were being distributed annually in the Philippines, placing it fifth in terms of numbers of Bibles distributed by country. In terms of New Testaments distributed, the annual figure in 2010 was 12,472 million; a figure which places it third behind the United States and Brazil.[42] This is a remarkable statistic given that the Bible was, by and large, a prohibited book in the Philippines before the American annexation

[40] Working from a Church growth paradigm, evangelical churches in the Philippines devised a strategy for planting churches throughout the nation called DAWN, Discipling A Whole Nation. Cf. James Montgomery and Donald McGavran, *The Discipling of a Nation* (California: Global Church Growth Bulletin, 1980).

[41] The two doctoral dissertations with a Mindanao focus, referenced above at n. 37 are a case in point. Both focus on investigating factors that contributed to the growth of C&MA and Southern Baptist churches.

[42] Bryan Harmelink, "Bible Translation and Distribution," in *Atlas of Global Christianity 1910-2010*, ed. Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross (2009), 298-99. The only other Southeast Asian nation featuring in the top ten nations in terms of volume of Bible distribution was Indonesia which is ninth in terms of whole Bibles and New Testaments distributed.

in 1898,[43] and indicates that a large percentage of Catholic Filipinos are clearly engaging with the Bible.[44]

Nevertheless, despite these figures, little or no research has been done to analyse how Filipinos engage with the Bible. If we broaden our perspective and consider the more general discipline of contextual theology, then the writings of Catholic scholars such as Leonardo N. Mercado and Jose de Mesa provide evidence that this is a live concern for Philippine theologians.[45] These authors have made invaluable contributions to this discipline within the Philippines and have helped us to understand how local forms of Catholicism emerge through grassroots communities' engagement with the tenets of Catholicism. De Mesa, in particular, has wrestled with the importance of facilitating the emergence of grassroots Christology that is not dependent upon doctrinal formulas handed down by professionals.[46] Nonetheless, the interests of these authors is theological and, despite intentions to the contrary, their reliance upon the professional theologian to facilitate grassroots theologising is clear.[47] Protestant authors have written some articles of quality on the topic[48] but Melba Maggay is the only noteworthy author

[43] Previous to this date missionaries belonging to the Spanish religious orders did not, and indeed could not, introduce translated copies of the Bible or any portion thereof to Filipinos. An Index of the Spanish Inquisition, printed in 1559, prohibited the printing of the Bible in Spanish or any other vernacular. E.M. Wilson, "Continental Versions to *c.* 1600: Spanish continental Versions to *c*. 1600: Spanish," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*, ed. S. Greenslade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 125.

[44] Movements within the Catholic Church in the Philippines such as the Base Ecclesial Communities, and those from within the Charismatic renewal sector of Catholicism, such as Couples for Christ, and *El Shaddai,* all prioritise Bible reading.

[45] Jose M. De Mesa, "Inculturation as Pilgrimage," in *Mission and Culture: The Louis Luzbetak Lectures*, ed. Stephen B. Bevans (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2012); *In Solidarity with the Culture: Studies in Theological Re-Rooting* (Quezon City: Maryhill, 1987); Leonardo N. Mercado, *Doing Filipino Theology* (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1997); *Elements of Filipino Theology* (Tacloban City: Divine Word University Publications, 1975).

[46] Jose M. De Mesa, "Making Salvation Concrete and Jesus Real: Trends in Asian Christology," *Exchange* 30, no. 1 (2001).

[47] De Mesa leans heavily on the theologian Edward Schillebeeckx to provide a framework for his experiment in doing community level Christology.

[48] ATS Contributors, ed. *Doing Theology in the Philippines* (Manila: OMF Literature Inc. and Asian Theological Seminary, 2005).

who has seriously examined Protestant Christianity, both local and missionary versions, as a contextual theologian.[49] The significance of this thesis is that it is an attempt to investigate what remains largely unstudied territory. Catholic and Protestant Christians' localising of Christianity throughout the Philippines is being shaped in part by their Bible reading. How exactly that reading is influencing these local expressions of the faith, and how their reading and interpretation are in turn being shaped by local cosmologies and/or deeply-rooted cultural values remains, for the most part, unexplored territory within the study of Christianity in the Philippines.

Methodology

Primary sources

A necessary first step for researching this topic was to examine how the evangelical missionary community utilised the Bible in their evangelism and church-planting activities. To expedite this, I was given access to archives at the OMF Centre in Manila. The most valuable documents within these were the personal prayer letters of missionaries and written reflections by the latter on particular aspects of Manobo cosmology and culture. The letters were a rich source of material on how these men and women used the Bible in daily evangelism, in giving instruction to new converts and in interpreting what they observed within the warp and weft of life within Manobo communities. Many of those who pioneered mission to the Manobo also committed to writing their theological musings on culture. Several of these reflections, typed on flimsy onion-skin paper, were invaluable for information on missionaries' views on the commitment to mother-tongue Scriptures, in addition

[49] Melba P. Maggay, *The Gospel in Filipino Context* (Manila: OMF Literature Inc., 1987); "Towards Sensitive Engagement with Filipino Indigenous Consciousness," *International Review of Mission* 87, no. 346 (July 1998); *A Clash of Cultures: Early American Protestant Missions and Filipino Religious Consciousness* (Manila: Anvil, 2011); "Theology, Context and the Filipino Church," in *Global Mission: Reflections and Case Studies in Contextualization for the Whole Church*, ed. Rose Dowsett (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2011).

to providing access to how missionaries used the Bible to interpret Manobo cosmology, the performance of sacrifices, cultural taboos, the role of the spirit priest, and burial practices. Material from these sources was incorporated into chapters three to six and was vital in establishing the degree of commitment on the part of these missionaries to using the Bible in the vernacular, sketching an outline of their convictions about the authority of Scripture, providing details of how they interpreted Manobo indigenous religion and used the Bible to construct a distinctively evangelical Christian message.

Additional primary sources utilised for this thesis included the journals, magazines and annual reports of the three Protestant missions that served in Mindanao during the years of American rule (see above, page 14), and whose files were accessed online within the Day Missions Collections at the Yale Divinity School Library. These provided details on how the Bible was used by the first Protestant missions in Mindanao and these have been incorporated into chapter two. Another important set of sources was the archives of the British and Foreign Bible Society at Cambridge University Library. By consulting annual reports, minutes of editorial sub-committees and letters, I was able to establish a more accurate account of the first Bible translation project on Mindanao—a translation of Luke's Gospel into "Sulu", one of the languages of Muslim communities within the southern Philippines.

Data Collection

In planning the data collection process this author sought permission from the leadership of MABCAM through their president Pastor Albert Catua. In consultation with Pastor Catua, a decision was taken to conduct fieldwork within four of MABCAM's eight zones.[50] The "zones" within MABCAM are essentially administrative districts, created a few years after its inception in 1985; a move designed to simplify the supervision of churches by devolving authority to local

[50] Since the completion of this fieldwork MABCAM has expanded to nine zones.

leaders. Each zone corresponds to a cluster of churches situated in roughly the same locale and united by a common Manobo language.[51] At the time of this author's fieldwork, four of the zones were located in the province of Davao del Norte, and four in Bukidnon province (see Figure 2), and so, with a view to ensuring that data was truly representative of the geographical spread of MABCAM churches fieldwork was conducted mainly within zones one and three, located in Davao del Norte and within zones four and six in Bukidnon.[52] The fieldwork took place in the Philippines from October 14, 2014 until December 15, 2014 and from February 03, 2015 until April 22, 2015.

Figure 2 Map indicating location of MABCAM churches

[51] The zone boundaries are purely MABCAM creations and do not correspond with any local municipal entities.
[52] Two interviews were also taken from zone 7, located in Davao del Norte.

In order to create as comprehensive an analysis as possible of how ordinary Manobo Christians engage with the Bible, a range of qualitative research methodologies was employed. Data was gathered using recorded, semi-structured interviews, recordings of sermons and Sunday school messages given by Manobo leaders on Sunday mornings and recordings of a young people's Bible study that took place in zone one over a period of two evenings.

The semi-structured interview was, in this author's opinion, the best instrument for gaining access to ordinary Manobo readers' views on the Bible, how they read it and interpret it. From a practical point of view the interview is a comfortable, non-threatening method that enables a non-reader to talk freely, but for reader and non-reader alike, the semi-structured interview is an adaptable tool that offers "empathic access to the world of the interviewee."[53] In addition, it allows the interviewer to "follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do."[54] With regard to the choice of interviewees, this author asked permission from church leaders from a select number of congregations in the designated zones to conduct interviews. Once permission was given, the leaders were asked to choose a number of interviewees from their respective congregations from across a range of ages, a mix of genders, from across a range of reading abilities and a range of academic achievement within formal education.[55]

Recorded sermons and Sunday school messages provided a valuable alternative source of data. In contradistinction to the interview process, the author had no control over what subjects were chosen by the speakers.

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[53] Steinar Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (London: Sage Publications Inc., 1996), 125.
[54] Judith Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, 4th ed. (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005), 157.
[55] The core questions used in the interview can be accessed in appendix A.

A word needs to be said here about the “ordinary readers” this author engaged during the period of field work. The ethnographic methods outlined above were used to engage a spectrum of informants, already listed above as ordinary members, Bible teachers and members of a young people’s bible study. All of these qualify as “ordinary indigenous readers” including the Bible teachers, who might normally, within other church groups or denominations, be educated or professionally trained individuals. MABCAM preachers do not undergo any kind of formal training and only two of the speakers recorded had graduated from a Bible school or seminary programme. MABCAM preachers are occasionally able to attend training courses organised within the association. These are designed with a view to encouraging men and women who provide leadership within churches in isolated villages while simultaneously trying to eke out a living by farming the steep hillsides of central Mindanao. With no formal training in hermeneutics, these preachers prepare and teach messages each week as ordinary readers. In order to multiply the number of messages recorded within the time frame available, the author purchased an additional MP3 voice recorder which enabled recordings to be made simultaneously in two church services, each Sunday morning.

The young people’s Bible study provided a third alternative source of data. The author was able to attend this event for two Friday evenings in November 2014. The venue was the village of Bunawan in zone one. There were fifteen to seventeen teenagers present each evening, with an even mix of males and females who gathered with their young pastor. Though the pastor was present on both evenings, he took no active part in the proceedings of the evening. The meeting began on both occasions with one of the young people present opening in prayer, reading a passage from the Bible and then giving a brief explanation. The reading desk was then left open for anyone who wanted to come forward and make additional comments on the meaning of the passage and its life application. On the first

evening there were three in total who commented on the passage; four on the second evening.

In closing this section a word needs to be said on the author's position as researcher. As a member of OMF, someone who has lived in a Manobo village with his family, and knows some of the informants personally, the author was not a complete outsider during the fieldwork process. One advantage of this position is that the author's pre-existing network of relationships within MABCAM facilitated smooth access to congregations. Fluency in the Manobo and Cebuano languages also meant the author was able to conduct all of the interviews personally without the need for an interpreter. The author was aware of course, that the position of "missionary" could potentially have led to a skewing of the responses to some interview questions, in favour of answers that might be potentially more agreeable to the "missionary". The author is satisfied that this, in the end, did not happen. Later in this thesis, data reflected on in chapters five and six reveals a willingness on the part of interviewees to provide answers that would not normally be considered congruent with evangelical norms.[56]

Analysing the Data

The analysis of gathered data began with assembling verbatim transcripts of all interviews, spoken messages and Bible studies. Following this the transcripts were read and reread a number of times. This allowed the author to begin identifying themes arising from the texts which could then be coded. Using the Nvivo qualitative research support software, the coding process was transacted efficiently and smoothly, with each identifiable theme being transposed to a "node" within the

[56] Relevant to this author's experience is that of Nathaniel Roberts, who has written about the epistemological importance of the behaviour of an ethnographer who is willing to live among those whose way of life he/she is researching. Roberts reported on the more honest testimonies he was allowed to record by making this step. Cf. Nathaniel Roberts, *To Be Cared For: The Power of Conversion and Foreignness of Belonging in an Indian Slum* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 22-34.

Nvivo system. In the early stages of the coding process a multiplicity of themes developed rapidly. As the coding process progressed it was possible to reduce the number of themes by merging those with closely related subject matter. The condensing of data into a manageable number of themes enabled a process of triangulation to proceed. Raw data could be compared with the primary source texts representing missionary positions on a number of issues related to biblical authority, interpretation or vernacular Scripture, as well as being examined through the lens of the indigenous Manobo cosmology represented in chapter three of this thesis. This procedure, in effect, became a three-way dialogue between data, primary source material and the core tenets of Manobo cosmology. Careful attention to this dialogue eventually allowed the author to detect where Manobo Christians had adopted doctrinal motifs from missionary evangelicalism and at the same time observe how these had been reconfigured by these same Christians through the mediating influence of their own worldview. Additional measures were introduced that further served to enhance the analysis. The Nvivo system's provision for examination of the intersection between "nodes" and "attributes," in qualitative research terms, meant being able to ask how variable characteristics of the survey population might affect interpretations of a particular theme. For example, does age, gender or location influence what translation of the Bible members prefer to read? Do levels of formal schooling or literacy affect whether or not a Manobo Christian is likely to use the Bible as a talisman or object of power? The effects of the interchange outlined above, combined with the additional cross-examination of data with possible variables, provided for a "thick" description of the Manobo appropriation of the Bible and constitutes the main sections of chapters four to six.

Outline of the Thesis

The following chapter provides historical background by outlining the history of Christian mission to the Philippines and, in particular, of mission to Mindanao. It

gives special attention to the use of the Bible within the mission polities of the mission agencies concerned. The chapter reveals that though the Bible arrived with Protestant mission agencies at the beginning of the twentieth century and was used in evangelising the island's *Lumads,* there was little or no effort expended on translating the Bible into any of the *Lumad* languages. Indigenous *Lumad* Christians throughout large swathes of the island could only access the Bible in English or Spanish and were, for the most part, unable to read the Bible for themselves before the end of World War II. In the post-war period, the increase in the number of mission agencies operating in Mindanao and the arrival of SIL increased the Bible's accessibility for the island's *Lumads*. Within this period, however, the Bible was primarily used as a tool for evangelism, a text that reinforced the legitimacy of the Protestant missionary 'gospel' of a very personal salvation that could be appropriated by faith. The chapter ends by suggesting it was this paradigmatic use of the Bible that the Manobo of central Mindanao encountered with the arrival of OMF missionaries in the mid-1970s.

Chapter three is an ethnographic study which investigates the issue of Manobo identity as well as providing an examination of the two major sources of indigenous authority within the matrix of Manobo life, namely Manobo cosmology and customary law. Our study of Manobo cosmology reveals a universe inhabited by *diwata* (spiritual beings), with whom the Manobo must constantly interact and negotiate if they are to achieve a harmonious co-existence with the same. Customary law is an unwritten body of authority that provides guidelines for a way of life that allows Manobo to live in harmony with their fellow Manobo. Both lodes of authority are mediated to Manobo communities through the expertise of the *baylan* (spirit priest) and the *datu* (local chief) and were the primary *loci* of indigenous authority that stood as a challenge to the spiritual authority of the Bible when Christian mission began in central Mindanao.

In chapters four to six of the thesis analysis of the data is used to examine how MABCAM members have interacted with the Bible and the doctrines and interpretive principles connected with its use that were mediated to them through OMF missionaries. Chapter four probes the evangelical missionary commitment to Bible translation as a supposedly crucial ingredient for the successful planting of indigenous churches and, in particular, examines how applicable Lamin Sanneh's thesis is to the context of Manobo Christianity. The Manobo Christian response to the translation theory is investigated through the lens of language and its place within the Manobo sense of identity; this discussion required appropriate interaction with sections of chapters two and three.

Chapter five deals with the theme of "biblical authority" and uses fieldwork data to present the Manobo response to this text-based source of spiritual authority that arrived to compete with local equivalents. The chapter makes apparent how Manobo Christians, in their enthusiastic adoption of the Bible as a new locus of authority, have reconfigured the evangelical meaning of biblical authority by adopting it as a signifier of modernity and a source of material power. By drawing on the material of chapters two and three this chapter demonstrates how the Manobo's sociopolitical context and the resilience of their cosmology have contributed to this unique position on biblical authority

Chapter six examines the "Manobo hermeneutic" – that is, it seeks to discover how Manobo Christians interpret the Bible as they read it. This is accomplished by firstly surveying Manobo Christians' Bible reading preferences, and then studying in more detail three themes which figured prominently in the research data, namely, the 'death of Christ', the 'character of God,' and 'Christian lifestyle.' The chapter lays out the meanings which MABCAM members ascribe to each of these categories, derived from their own distinctive hermeneutic, which is in turn shaped by the dyad of missionary theology and Manobo cosmology.

In summary, this thesis should be read as one context-specific attempt at fidelity to the central purpose of study within the field of World Christianity, *viz.* to study and make known the reception and practice of the Christian faith by ordinary Christians from communities and regions across the world, whose voice has often been inaudible within the chronicles of Christian history. This thesis strives to redress this imbalance by uncovering the Christianity of the Manobo people of central Mindanao, through the lens of their appropriation of the Bible. In every section of this thesis it is their voice, their response to the arrival of this book by the efforts of foreign missionaries that this author strives to make plain to the reader. With that end in view, the next chapter takes us back in time to the entrance of the Bible upon the stage that is Mindanao.

Chapter Two. Christian Mission and the Bible in Mindanao

The appropriation of the Bible by the Manobo of central Mindanao took place within the broader context of their reception of Christianity. For this reason, room will be made in this chapter for a study of the trajectory of Christianity in the Philippines, with special attention being given to its arrival and progress on the island of Mindanao. The time frame for this begins with the arrival of the Spanish in the sixteenth century and continues until the mid-1970s when Protestant mission began among the Manobo, who form the survey population of this thesis. For 300 years of this period, Spanish Catholicism was the only Christian mission force on Mindanao and though the Manobo never became Catholic, the longevity of the presence of Catholic missionaries on the island, their strenuous efforts to evangelise the indigenous populace, and how the latter appropriated the faith from the Spanish missionary friars validates their importance for this study. Local inhabitants' appropriation of Spanish Catholicism was a process that involved selecting, reinterpreting and de-emphasising some elements of the new religion; a process that makes clear that the appropriation of Christianity by the Manobo has obvious continuities with the Spanish era.

It goes without saying that we must also analyse the influence of the Protestant mission within Mindanao since this is the form of Christianity eventually embraced by the Manobo. The story of Protestant mission in Mindanao, though a more polyvalent narrative than that of the Spanish Catholic period, presents us with a number of agencies that shared a common origin in the USA. They also shared common objectives in their mission and for the most part, a shared commitment to using the Bible as the guiding text for their mission and to making it widely available to the peoples of Mindanao. The course of Protestant mission, its ideology and the changes it underwent post-World War II, contributed very directly to the form of Christianity that the Manobo of Central Mindanao engaged with in the mid-1970s.

This chapter will begin with a brief look at how the Spanish missionary friars went about their evangelisation, the particular challenges they faced and how these impacted their mission to Mindanao. We shall then consider how these challenges shaped the eventual emergence of a 'Filipino Catholicism' before reflecting on how attempts to introduce the Bible fared in the closing decades of the Spanish colonial era. We shall then proceed to an examination of Protestant mission to the islands, beginning with a review of how early Protestants organised their efforts and the impact of the Bible societies. Following this, we shall survey the work of Protestant agencies in Mindanao from the beginning of the American era until the outbreak of World War II, paying particular attention to their use of the Bible and the role accorded to Bible translation. The final section of the chapter will investigate the mission and Bible usage of Protestant agencies in the decades following World War II, and conclude with the a brief introduction to SIL and OMF International, the two agencies whose activities impinge directly upon the subject matter of this thesis.

The Philippines and Spanish Catholicism

Missionaries from the Spanish Catholic orders were involved from the very beginning in the process of pacifying the islands which eventually were named *Las Yslas Filipinas*. Five Augustinian friars accompanied the Legazpi expedition of 1565 that finally secured the islands for the Spanish King Philip II.[57] The Augustinians were quickly followed by the Franciscans, Dominicans and the Jesuits. These Spanish missionary priests from the religious orders, viewed their mission as a spiritual conquest analogous to that of the *conquistadores*.[58] They were forthright in declaring that the Catholic Church was the repository of God's truth and that by entering it through the gate of baptism people would receive salvation. The number

[57] The Legazpi expedition, led by Don Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, was the fifth Spanish expedition to the islands and occurred 44 years after the first expedition led by Ferdinand Magellan.
[58] Priests who are members of a Catholic order are typically referred to as "religious" or "regular priests." The use of the term "regular" comes from the Latin term *regule*, meaning "rule." A regular priest is one who is bound in obedience to the "rule" of his order.

of baptisms multiplied in tandem with the increasing number of priests so that by 1622 there were a recorded 500,000 baptisms in the islands.[59] In preparation for baptism new converts were expected to repent of their pagan past, affirm their belief in the efficacy of the sacrament, to recite by memory the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria*, the *Credo*, and the Ten Commandments. The decision of the Synod (see below) meant that all of the instruction and catechesis needed to prepare people for baptism could be done in the mother-tongue of new converts. They also received instruction on the general obligations of a Christian such as attending mass and feast days, disavowing idolatry, slavery, polygamy and observing at least one annual confession.[60]

The Synod of Manila (1582-86) took the decision to use the vernacular languages in evangelisation, a move that had important consequences for the missionary priests and for the reception of Christianity by Filipinos. Firstly, all of the catechesis and instruction referred to above could be done using the mother tongue of new converts, a boon to the task of making the faith more readily acceptable and less foreign. Secondly, having a cohort of priests competent in the languages of their spheres of influence led to them romanising the vernacular syllabary, producing grammars and sermon anthologies, catechisms and novenas.[61] Thirdly, this use of local languages made Christianity more readily accessible to the island's scattered peoples and created the possibility of innovative, indigenous interpretations of the Christ event.

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[59] John L. Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 56.
[60] John L. Phelan, "Pre-Baptismal Instruction and the Administration of Baptism in the Philippines During the Sixteenth Century," *The Americas* 12, no. 1 (July, 1955): 6.. See also Peter G. Gowing, *Islands under the Cross* (Manila: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 1967), 39-49.
[61] Jose Mario C. Francisco, "Christianity as Church and Story and the Birth of the Filipino Nation in the Nineteenth Century " in *Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 529.

This general outline of the religious orders' methods in evangelisation is reflected in the pattern of work employed by the Jesuits and the Augustinian Recollects on Mindanao. The priests of both these orders were fluent in the Visayan and Manobo languages and their priorities were to baptise, catechise and to produce Christians loyal to the Catholic Church and the King of Spain. The Jesuits, in particular, were outspoken in their condemnation of slavery and idolatry, sometimes demonstrating their hatred of the latter by destroying or removing images while replacing them with crucifixes or images of the virgin.[62]

Through the records of the Jesuits we can also gain a measure of insight into how Christian doctrines were transmitted as part of the instruction given in preparation for baptism. The Jesuit priest Pablo Pastells, writing to his provincial in 1884, outlined his methods of instruction on Mindanao. God was explained as "one in essence and three in persons", the one who rewards those who die in a state of grace and who punishes the wicked. Christ was depicted as God who became man with particular emphasis on his crucifixion "to save and redeem us sinners." Pictures were used to further explain creation, Adam and Eve, original sin, the details of the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ. Pictures were also used to explicate the doctrines of the creed and the Ten Commandments, the Holy Mother Church and the sacraments.[63]

The unflagging commitment of the Spanish friars to evangelism and the use of the vernacular suggest a positive approach to the missionary task. Nonetheless, there were configurations within the matrix of their mission which posed serious challenges to the friars and had lasting consequences for the communication and

[62] Pablo Pastells, *Mission to Mindanao, 1859-1890: From the Spanish of Pablo Pastells,* Trans. Peter Schreurs, vol. 1, (Cebu City, San Carlos Publication, 1994), 174, 267.
[63] Pablo Pastells, *Misión de la Compañía de Jesus de Filipina en el siglo XIX,* vol. 2 (Barcelona, 1916-1917), 37; quoted in Peter Schreurs, *Caraga Antigua 1521-1910: The Hispanization and Christianization of Agusan, Surigao and East Davao* (Cebu City: University of San Carlos, 1989), 378-79.

reception of their message. We shall briefly consider the three most important factors that limited the effectiveness of Catholic evangelisation.

The Nature of the Church/State partnership

The *Patronato Real* meant the Spanish king was authorised by the papacy to oversee the evangelisation programme in the Philippines by providing financial support and protection to the friars and the new churches. In return, the King had authority to erect dioceses, nominate bishops, appoint priests to parishes and benefices and collect tribute. Nevertheless, despite what was potentially a mutually beneficial arrangement, a complicating factor was that the priorities of each party frequently clashed with those of the other.

This became apparent within the first few years of the Legazpi settlement when the Augustinian friars challenged the legal basis of Spain's occupation of the islands. This action followed the Dominican example of Francisco Vitoria during the reign of the Spanish emperor Charles V, who had successfully reasoned that the emperor had no jurisdiction over the non-Christian peoples of the Americas.[64] Philip II eventually had to rule that tribute could only be collected from citizens who had willingly submitted to the authority of God and King; a policy which effectively meant that "Colonization was predicated on conversion and only possible because of the latter."[65] By challenging the abusive behaviour they observed on the part of Spanish *encomenderos* towards local residents, the friars managed to enforce a much more benign policy of pacification than had been in force during Spain's control of the Americas.

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[64] J. Gayo Aragon, "The Controversy over Justification of Spanish Rule in the Philippines," in *Studies in Philippine Church History*, ed. Gerald Anderson (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969), 5. Aragon explains that though Vitoria's views drew both defenders and opponents in Spain, they made a lasting impact through the efforts of his fellow Dominican, Bartolomé de las Casas.
[65] Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule*, First Paperback ed. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 18.

The church's mission in the Philippines also collided with the colonial government's desire to enrich the King and those who ruled on his behalf in the colony. The *conquistadores* hoped to find gold in the new colony and it was no secret that Spain also wanted a share in the very profitable spice trade based in the Moluccas, south of Mindanao. The Jesuit Pedro Chirino, writing in 1604, makes this clear:

> ". . . . they (the Portuguese) did not, however, stop there, being bound for the islands of Maluco, in eager quest of spices and drugs, which are to be found there in such abundance. It was this very desire to secure drugs that caused the Spaniards, or Castilians, to discover and settle the Filipinas, as is well known."[66]

Spain's war with the Dutch meant the dream of riches from the Spice Islands eventually evaporated and though the vision of Philippine gold never materialised in the quantities that the *conquistadores* had dreamed of, they were relentless in their attempts to control territory where gold was mined. This provoked opposition from the friars, who were motivated by a "desire to spare the Filipinos the odious exploitation of the mining districts of Peru and Central America which had actually decimated the native populations in those regions."[67]

Another source of unease between the church and state was the system of *encomienda,* an elemental component of Spain's strategy for establishing control in their new colony. An *encomienda* was a large tract of land awarded to notable men or women who had contributed to the pacification of the islands*,* such as worthy soldiers or wealthy Spanish couples.[68] *Encomenderos* had the right to collect tribute in goods and labour from the residents of their *encomiendas* with the proviso that

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[66] Pedro Chirino SJ, "Relation of the Filipinas Islands and of What Has There Been Accomplished by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus," ed. Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, trans. Frederic W. Morrison and Emma Blair, 55 vols., vol. xii, *The Philippines Islands, 1493-1898* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1903-1909). Hereafter the volumes of Blair and Robertson will be referred to as *BRPI*.
[67] William Henry Scott, *the Discovery of the Igorots: Spanish Contacts with the Pagans of Northern Luzon,* Revised ed. (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1974), 21.
[68] The policy of *Encomienda* had already been the primary Spanish method for land management in Mexico and Peru. For further reading, *cf.* Susan E. Ramirez, *Provincial Patriarchs: Land Tenure and the Economics of Power in Colonial Peru* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986).

they were to guarantee the residents' protection and religious instruction. Despite these legal provisions, it was a frequent complaint of the friars that many *encomenderos* were assiduous in the collection of tribute but highly negligent when it came to providing religious instruction. In the report on *encomiendas* by governor Dasmariñas in 1591, the reader frequently encounters comments on the state of individual *encomiendas* such as the following: "It has no instruction and needs one minister . . . . "[69] "It has never had instruction, but has justice from Calilaya."[70] "It has justice, and is pacified. It has no instruction, and needs one minister. . . ."[71] These shortcomings on the part of colonial officials, *conquistadores* or *encomenderos* drew criticism from the friars because of the perceived damage their behaviour inflicted on the clergy's efforts to evangelise.

A Dispersed Populace and Shortage of Missionary Personnel

The Spanish mission also struggled to impose itself on a population that was heavily decentralised, living in small autocephalous communities close to their fields. This reduced the capacity of the colonial government to exploit the local populace for tribute and labour and of the Catholic mission to establish congregations and give religious instruction. The Spanish policy of "reduction" [72] was implemented as an attempt to impose settlement on the dispersed inhabitants but, by the end of the seventeenth century, outside of the confines of Greater Manila, reduction was still being stoutly resisted by the islands' inhabitants.[73] A widely scattered population

[69] Gomez Perez Dasmarinas, "Account of the Encomiendas of the Philippine Islands," *BRPI*, vol. 8, 131.
[70] *Ibid.,* 132
[71] *Ibid.,* 128
[72] The use here of the English word "reduce" corresponds to the Spanish Policy of *reduccion*, which involved gathering small, scattered communities and concentrating them in a single, permanent settlement. Reduction as a settlement policy had already been used by the Jesuits for the Christianizing and pacifying of the Guarani Indians in what is present day Paraguay. See Barbara Ganson, *The Guarani Under Spanish Rule* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).
[73] Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines,* 45.

distributed over hundreds of islands, with no unifying language or institution, presented the Spanish missionaries with an almost impossible task.

Accentuating the enormity of their assignment was the small number of priests relative to the size of their mission; the number only ever varied from 254 to 400.[74] The shortage of priests and the scattered nature of the populace outside of Manila produced an ecclesial system that allowed only sporadic contact between people and clergy. People's reluctance to settle in the parish capital, known as the *cabecera*, meant they only worshipped in the parish church on special occasions, preferring to attend religious services in the subordinate villages where there were *visita* chapels. The latter were only occasionally visited by a non-resident priest who normally resided at the *cabecera*.[75] Ultimately, this intermittent style of pastoral oversight did not permit a thoroughgoing Christianization in the Hispanic mould and allowed indigenous cultural practices to leave their mark on Philippine Catholicism.

The Challenge of Religious versus Diocesan authority

The capacity of the regulars to fulfil their mission might not have been so burdensome if the religious orders had not resisted the training of Filipinos for priestly office. This standpoint was rooted, not just in prejudice, but in the troubled relationship between the religious and episcopal authorities. The religious had been assigned their territories of responsibility a year before the Philippines became an ecclesiastical province with its own episcopate. Being already well 'dug-in' the orders refused to cooperate with demands to relinquish the control of established parishes to episcopal authority.[76] This arrangement was not conducive to the development of a Filipino clergy and, alongside a widespread prejudice against the

[74] Ibid, 41.
[75] Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines,* 47.
[76] Horacio De la Costa, "The Development of the Native Clergy in the Philippines," in *Studies in Philippine Church History*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969).

suitability of the Filipino temperament for holy orders, meant it was the middle of the eighteenth century before the training of a local priesthood was initiated.[77]

Having ecclesiastical control over large territories placed the regular orders in a position of strength which they refused to relinquish. Both the ecclesial and the governing authorities found themselves unable to force unwanted policies on the regular orders. Whenever they did, the friars would simply resign their positions and retire to their *conventos* in Manila, leaving large swathes of the country ungovernable. The friars were also eventually able to enrich themselves by virtue of their strong position in the provinces. Shortly after the Americans took control of the Philippines, the United States government purchased 410,000 acres of land that had been in the hands of the religious orders.[78] In the end, the determination of the religious orders to maintain their position of privilege adversely affected their mission to Christianise the islands. Not only did their resistance to a Filipino priesthood stymie the early emergence of a workforce that would have expanded their capacity to evangelise, it also gave birth to levels of resentment that added to the revolutionary ferment of the nineteenth century.[79] Before we examine how these dynamics of the Spanish mission shaped the form of Philippine Catholicism, we must survey how the mission fared in Mindanao.

Spanish Catholicism in Mindanao

It was the joint duty of church and state to pacify and Christianize the islands and, in particular, the provision of protection and religious instruction for residents of an *encomienda* that led to the placement of Jesuit priests in Butuan, north-eastern Mindanao in 1596. The *encomienda* at Butuan was assessed as one that, ". . . has

[77] Ibid, 87.
[78] Gowing, *Islands under the Cross*, 117.
[79] Cesar Adib Majul, "Anticlericalism During the Reform Movement and the Philippine Revolution," in *Studies in Philippine Church History*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969).

justice, but no instruction. Two religious are necessary to take care of it, for it has four thousand and eight hundred persons."[80]

It is also likely that the lure of gold had brought the Spanish to Mindanao, bearing in mind that a letter to Philip II from Governor Mirandaola in 1574 had made reference to the good gold around Butuan.[81] In 1597 the first church in Mindanao was dedicated in Butuan[82] but, despite this early success, the Jesuits withdrew from the eastern half of Mindanao and concentrated on mission to the western side of the island. Mission in the east passed to the Augustinian Recollects who arrived in 1622.[83]

In evangelising Mindanao, the Jesuits and Recollects were even more heavily dependent on the church-state arrangement that was operative in the rest of the islands. The strong position of the Muslim Sultanate of Maguindanao, based in the town of Cotabato in the west of the island, ensured the need for constant military action, either to defend new Christian communities from Moro slave-raiding forays or to attack the Sultan at his redoubt in Maguindanao.[84] Spanish military efforts were never sufficient to subjugate the Sultanate and the Jesuit mission was, subsequently, never able to flourish in the west.

Using the sea as their highway, evangelisation by the Recollects was easier to initiate in the east in the province of Caraga, which stretched the full length of Mindanao's Pacific littoral from Punta San Agustin in the south to Gingoog on the

[80] Dasmariñas, *Account of the Encomiendas,* in *BRPI,* vol. 8, 127.
[81] Andres De Mirandaola, "Letter from Andres De Mirandaola to Felipe II," in *The Philippine Islands 1493*-1803, ed. E. H. Blair and J. A. Robertson, vol. 3 (Cleveland: A.H. Clark Company, 1903), 168.
[82] Horacio De la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581-1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 167.
[83] The Recollects were originally known as the Recoletos, formed by separating from the Augustinians during the "Reform" movement in 1588. In 1602 several of these "reformed" communities were gathered and consolidated into a province which in 1621 was officially named "Recollect" or "Discalced Augustinians." Cf. Schreurs, *Caraga Antigua*, 124.
[84] The Spanish branded the Muslims of the southern Philippines "Moros", after their old Moorish enemies on the Iberian Peninsula.

northern coastline. The converts here were a mixture of Visayan-speaking settlers and any *Lumads* who were willing to be coaxed out of the forest to settle in reductions at the coast. Missionary priests also began a push to evangelise Manobo in the upper Agusan River valley and constructed a fort at Linao in 1625, some 40 leagues from the sea.[85] These communities of Christians were constantly under attack in the seventeenth century from bands of Manobo who had not submitted to the mission or from Maguindanao Moro raiders, often aided and abetted by the Dutch.[86] This required the constant need for Spanish military intervention.

Figure 3 Map showing key towns for the periods of Spanish & American rule

[85] Schreurs, *Caraga Antigua,* 139.

[86] The Dutch interest in helping the Maguindanao was to keep Spain's hold in the south as weak as possible and thus prevent them meddling in the Spice Islands to the south. For more details of Dutch activities in the southern Philippines, see chapter 11 of Schreurs, *Caraga Antigua,* 164-176.

The peculiar configurations of the Spanish mission discussed above, which created unique challenges to the religious orders' *modus operandi*, were also played out in Mindanao. The friars' heavy dependence on the pacifying role of the state was a mixed blessing for the Recollect and Jesuit missions. Schreurs reports on a Manobo rebellion that was quashed in such a severe manner by military operations that the resultant hatred of the Spaniards on the part of the Manobo meant no priest could be assigned to the upper Agusan region for almost 200 years.[87] Notwithstanding the negative ramifications, it is unlikely that the Christian settlement on the Pacific east coast of Mindanao would have survived to the end of the Spanish era, were it not for the repeated Spanish military interventions on their behalf.

The Spanish demand for tribute and the constant attacks by Moro raiding parties also led to frequent abandonment of the reductions. The Recollect provincial who visited Caraga in 1765 wrote to the King saying that all he had seen were the ruins of villages and no people, because all had dispersed to the jungle.[88] Pastells, in his record of the second period of Jesuit mission in Mindanao (1859-98), concluded that the *Lumad* was a "loather of living in villages, where they would be under a civil and social authority and would be burdened with duties to which they were not accustomed."[89] We have already noted how this proclivity for absconding from the reductions repeatedly circumscribed the missionaries' programme of Christianisation. The shortage of priests compounded the difficulty in Mindanao as it did elsewhere. During the Recollect period of mission the priests serving the entire region of Caraga, with a coastline of 550 kilometres, only ever numbered between eight and twelve and, in keeping with their co-religious in the Visayan Islands and Luzon, the two Mindanao orders were cool towards the idea of training

[87] Ibid, 173-74.
[88] Ibid, 238.
[89] Pablo Pastells, *Mission to Mindanao,* vol. 1, 218-19.

Filipino clergy.[90] Despite the unfaltering zeal of the Recollect and Jesuit priests, these factors imposed constraints on the expansion of the mission on Mindanao. By the end of the Spanish era, with the exception of the Agusan River Valley and the Bukidnon plateau, the reduced Christian settlements on the island were restricted to the coast.

The Intricacies of Appropriation and the Emergence of a Filipinized Catholicism

The use of the vernacular by Spanish missionary priests in their evangelisation contributed greatly to the uptake of the new religion by the indigenous population. According to Francisco, the vernaculars were "transformed into a language of redemption and created a Christianity easily appropriated by natives."[91] However, what is important to bear in mind is that the complexities of the missionary priests' working context meant they could only exercise superficial influence upon the form and content of the Catholic Christianity that developed around them. By "complexities" is meant the confluence of factors already outlined in this chapter, namely, the shortage of priests, the decentralised populace, the necessity of having to serve as administrators of the crown's interests, the strained relationship with the state and conflict over regular versus episcopal authority. The priests' lack of capacity to adequately supervise the localisation of Catholicism going on in the islands helped create space for what Francisco describes as a "vibrant religiosity based on the Christ story and its symbolic world."[92]

[90] The Recollects ordained their first Filipino priest in 1813 and a second in 1818.The admission of novices was then discontinued in the 1850s. There are only two recorded examples of Filipinos being admitted to the Jesuit Order in the years 1593 and 1689 before the expulsion of the Order in 1768. In the second period of Jesuit mission in the latter decades of the 19th century, no provision was made for a Filipino novitiate though a few Filipinos were admitted for training in Spain. See John N. Schumacher, "Early Filipino Jesuits: 1593-1930," *Philippine Studies* 29 (1981).
[91] Francisco, *Christianity as Church and Story,* 529.
[92] Ibid, 532.

An example of this was the singing and/or dramatic enactment of the Passion of Jesus every year during Holy Week. This reinforced the centrality of the suffering Christ to the Christian faith of Philippine Catholics as well as helping shape the ideology of some nineteenth-century revolutionary movements.[93] As in much of Latin America, many of the elements of the pre-Spanish indigenous religion were also able to survive Spanish attempts at their removal because they could blend with Catholic practices. Fernando Zialcita has demonstrated how the Catholic saints today are venerated as though they were dead ancestors[94] and Fanella Cannell's research gives us insights into the lives of spirit mediums whose spirit companions enable them to practise healing while remaining within the spiritual orbit of Catholicism.[95]

Another factor that permitted local innovations to thrive was a linguistic one. In an effort to reinforce the point that Christianity was fundamentally different from indigenous religion, Spanish was retained for the names of God and core doctrinal terminology. This allowed Catholicism to be reinterpreted according to people's own indigenous experience.

> "Apparently, since the critical concepts of Christianity were left untranslated by the missionaries, the people turned out to have greater control as to what to make of the words. This led, on the one hand, to such practices as rote memorisation and their ritualistic use in healing and in the warding off of bad spirits."[96]

Vicente Rafael, who has closely studied Tagalog speakers' response to the Spanish practice of translating Christian texts, writes that proper names like Jesus, Mary and Joseph, which resist translation "could be invested with the aura of a powerful

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[93] Reynaldo Clemeña Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*, 3rd print ed. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1989), 11-12.
[94] Fernando N. Zialcita, "Popular Interpretations of the Passion of Christ," *Philippine Sociological Review* 34, no. 1-4 (1986), 287-88.
[95] Fenella Cannell, *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
[96] Melba P. Maggay, *A Clash of Cultures: Early American Protestant Missions and Filipino Religious Consciousness* (Manila: Anvil, 2011), 162.

weapon. Like amulets they can distance the speaker from the threat of death."[97] The situation on Mindanao, with its small number of priests and vast, forested interior gave birth to similar permutations of orthodox Catholicism. Pastells records a missionary Jesuit's astonished reaction to a Manobo datu who produced a cross which he claimed was his god and would only go to fight after saying "Jesus, Maria José." The datu could pray the "Our Father" and say the creed in Cebuano but denied that he was a Christian.[98]

These innovative, indigenous responses to Catholic doctrines and texts have two important elements in common. They were shaped by the political and religious contexts of the local populace and they modified and exceeded the meanings intended by the Spanish missionaries, features of the appropriation process that we shall see replicated in the Manobo reception of the Bible.

Spain, the Bible and the Philippines

In the sixteenth century, Spain made use of the Inquisition to ruthlessly suppress the few Protestant communities that had managed to gain a foothold in the kingdom.[99] Philippine Catholicism, therefore, emerged from Filipinos' encounter with the central motifs of a counter-reformation Catholicism. Though direct access to the biblical text was not possible for Filipino Catholics, the Christian story was mediated through the doctrinal teaching of the priests, participation in the sacraments and in the music and drama of the *Pasyon*.

[97] Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism,* 120.
[98] Pablo Pastells, *Mission to Mindanao, 1859-1900: From the Spanish of Pablo Pastells*, trans. Peter Schreurs, vol. 3 (Cebu City: San Carlos Publications, 1994), 56.
[99] J. D. Hughey, *Religious Freedom in Spain : Its Ebb and Flow* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1955), 10.

Though liberal ideas of liberty and equality began to gain currency in Spain in the late nineteenth century, freedom to practise other religions took a long time to gain acceptance and Protestant efforts to re-establish a presence ebbed and flowed. The British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) established a work in the 1830s through its emissary George Borrow, who was able to print Bibles, opened a Bible shop in Madrid and initiated a programme of colportage.[100] In 1869, following the revolution of the previous year, there was what Eaton has described as "an unparalleled flood of Protestant missionaries into Spain," the most numerous of which were Brethren missionaries from Britain, for whom the distribution of Scripture was the primary task.[101] Following the revolution in 1868, though the society was able to increase the extent of their colportage, its gains were repeatedly interrupted by setbacks. Borrow was frequently arrested and imprisoned and eventually had to abandon his work. The gains after 1868 were also offset by events in 1876, when the Spanish constitution was rewritten and changes in the law meant the Society had to curtail its public profile. Despite the unpredictable environment in which it operated, the Society still continued to make gains and by 1878 some 830,500 copies of the Scriptures had been printed in Madrid.[102]

These hard-fought efforts by Protestants in Spain were mirrored to some extent in the Philippines where efforts to introduce the Bible into the islands had to contend with a very conservative and resistant clergy. In 1870, John A. Haffenden, a sub-agent of the BFBS and employee of an English business firm in Manila, smuggled Bibles into Manila and secretively distributed them to prominent people in the provinces.[103] The determination of the Catholic authorities to enforce an embargo

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[100] George Borrow, *The Bible in Spain* (London: Dent, 1903).
[101] Kent Eaton, *Protestant Missionaries in Spain, 1869-1936: "Shall the Papists Prevail?"* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 94-95.
[102] Sue Jackson, "The Bible in Spain and Gibraltar," in *Sowing the Word: The Cultural Impact of the British and Foreign Bible Society 1802-2004*, ed. Stephen Batalden, Kathleen Cann, and John Dean (Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2004), 313.
[103] This story appears in, T. Valentino Sitoy, "An Aborted Spanish Protestant Mission to the Philippines," *Siliman Journal* 15 (second quarter 1968), 264. This story emerged from a conversation

on the Bible was played out very poignantly in the life of a Dominican priest, Fr. Manrique Alonso Lallave, who arrived in the Philippines in 1860 and began service in Pangasinan, central Luzon. After a falling out with his superiors Lallave, along with three of his Dominican *confrères*, was sent back to Spain where, in 1872 he renounced Catholicism, got married and became a Protestant pastor. In the following year he translated Luke's Gospel into Pangasinan, the language of the region where he had served as a Dominican priest in the Philippines.[104] In 1889, under the aegis of the BFBS, Lallave returned to the Philippines with his young assistant, Felipe de P. Castells. Their objective was to set up a Bible depot in Manila for the distribution of Spanish Bibles and Lallave's Pangasinan translations of the four Gospels and Acts. Upon arrival their two crates of Scriptures were seized by the Manila Royal Customs and, within a few weeks, Lallave was dead. Castells tried to remain in Manila and continue with his application to establish a Bible depot in the city. Unsuccessful, he had to leave Manila with the two crates of Pangasinan Scriptures which he redeposited with the Bible Society in Singapore.[105]

Castells was convinced that he and Lallave had been poisoned and it is certainly possible that Lallave's arrival was well known in advance. He was returning as a priest-turned-Protestant, he had also become a member of the Masonic order, and his intended work would have been viewed as an attack on his former profession. Ironically, though his mission in 1889 failed, his endeavours stiffened the resolve of the Bible Society to take forward the work which he had begun. The supposedly failed mission of Castells and Lallave also happened at what was to be the twilight of the missionary friars' ascendancy in the Philippines. As the century drew to a close, levels of resentment against the friars boiled over into a clamour for change.

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between Haffenden and Erick Lund recorded in Lund's *Missionsbilder,* Trans. By Linnea A. Nelson (Los Angeles: R. Homiletica, 1918). Lund went on to become the first Baptist missionary to the Philippines.

[104] This was the first piece of Scripture to be translated into a Philippine language.

[105] Sitoy, *An aborted Spanish Protestant Mission,* 265-280.

The Propaganda movement, organised in Spain by members of the Philippine *intelligentsia* in exile, frequently targeted the friars in their writings. They accused the friars of holding back progress in the Philippines and criticised them for being landlords while professing to be holy men bound by vows of poverty.[106] The anti-friar sentiment finally culminated in a schism from the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines, and the forming of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* in 1903; a move which took 1,600,000 Filipino Catholics from the Church along with dozens of priests.[107] The negative estimation of the friars at the close of the Spanish era would also make countless Filipinos more receptive to the message of American Protestant missionaries and the Bible.

The Protestant Mission

The American annexation of the Philippines from Spain in 1898 engendered fevered debate throughout the United States. Those who opposed what they considered to be an imperialist venture did so on the grounds that it betrayed American values of freedom and justice. The argument in favour drew on Americans' self-understanding as a Christian nation with annexation being supported as the "next step in a divinely mandated trajectory."[108] By appealing to this national narrative, law-makers and Christian leaders were able to overcome what appeared to be a contradiction in the use of colonialism as a means of showing benevolence.[109] The content of the divine mandate was articulated in the words of President McKinley who declared in an interview that America's duty as a nation was "To educate the

[106] Gowing, *Islands under the Cross*, 93-94.
[107] Researchers differ on the exact number of priests who went over to the IFI. Numbers vary from 100 to 300. For further reading see Lewis B. Whittemore, *Struggle for Freedom: History of the Philippine Independent Church.* (Greenwich, Conn: Seabury Press, 1961).
[108] Susan K. Harris, *God's Arbiters: Americans and the Philippines, 1898-1902* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 24-25.
[109] Stuart Creighton Miller, *"Benevolent Assimilation": The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1982), 18.

Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellowmen for whom Christ also died."[110]

Protestant church leaders in the US enthusiastically supported their government's new venture in the Philippines and with the disestablishment of the Roman Catholic Church, there was nothing to hinder American mission agencies placing workers and beginning evangelism in the islands.[111] Within a few years of the signing of the treaty of Paris in 1898, workers from the Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Baptists, the United Brethren, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Disciples of Christ and Congregationalists had arrived in Manila. In 1901, missionary representatives of the newly arrived denominations and agencies met in Manila and formed the Evangelical Union. The Union hatched a comity agreement that assigned territories of operation to each mission throughout the Philippines. Eastern Mindanao was assigned to the Congregational missionaries of the American Board. The west of the island and the Sulu archipelago were assigned to the C&MA.[112] The Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA also began a mission on Mindanao though it opted out of joining the Evangelical Union. It refused to be in partnership with those who would evangelise members of a "sister communion," i.e. the Roman Catholic Church.

[110] General James F. Rusling, "Interview with President Mckinley," *The Christian Advocate*, no. 78 (January 22 1903), quoted in Mariano C. Apilado, *Revolutionary Spirituality: a study of the Protestant role in the American colonial rule of the Philippines,* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1999), 57.
[111] In 1902 the Philippine Organic Act was passed in the US Congress which effectively disestablished the Catholic Church. The relevant paragraph of section 5 of the act reads, "That no law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, and that the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed." The Philippine Organic Act of 1902, accessed September 29, 2015 at the Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, http://www.gov.ph/constitutions/the-philippine-organic-act-of-1902/ .
[112] Gowing, *Islands under the Cross*, 127-28.

The Bible and the Bible Societies in the Philippines

Maggay believes that, as Spanish rule drew to its close, disillusionment with the friars meant there was a critical mass of people who were, ". . . ripe for the sowing of a post-Enlightenment religion, with a strong bias toward a reasoned faith, egalitarianism and the primacy of the individual conscience over the dictates of an external clerical authority."[113]

It was perhaps this sense that Filipinos were ready for an alternative to Spanish Catholicism that inspired an agent of the BFBS, Mr Charles B. Randall. Randall arrived in Manila in August 1898, within three weeks of the Spanish surrender in Manila, and began organising the distribution and sale of Scripture in Spanish, Chinese, English and the Philippine language Pangasinan. The following year, portions of the Scriptures in Tagalog, Bicolano and Ilocano arrived by ship in the Philippines from printing presses in Madrid, all of which had been translated with the help of Filipino exiles living in Spain.[114]

The American Bible Society (ABS) arrived in 1899 and an agreement was reached between the two agencies on the work of translation. The BFBS assumed the task of seeing to completion translations of the Bible in Tagalog, Bicolano and Pangasinan. The ABS committed themselves to the same objective for the Ilocano, Visayan, and Pampangan languages.[115] With the presence of two Bible societies in the islands, Bible translation and colportage went into full swing. The Tagalog New Testament, the first one to be completed in a Philippine language, passed into circulation in July 1902. By 1904, 180,600 copies of Scripture had been circulated in ten languages.[116] By 1919, when the BFBS withdrew from the Philippines in favour of the ABS, they

[113] Maggay, *A Clash of Cultures,* xvi.
[114] William Canton, *History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 5 vols., vol. V (London: John Murray, 1904-1910), 155.
[115] Annual Report of the American Bible Society, 1910, 346.
[116] Canton, *History of the BFBS,* 158.

had published translations of the whole Bible into Visayan, Pangasinan, Bicolano and Tagalog; they had also completed translations of portions of the Bible into Bontoc, Ifugao, Sulu and Igorot.[117] By 1923, the ABS had published complete translations of the Bible into Ilocano, Pampangan and Hiligaynon and portions of the Bible into Ifugao, Ibanag and Samar.[118] Historiography relating to the advent of the vernacular Bible through the agency of American missionaries often refers to the revolutionary force of the Bible's new availability. According to Kwantes, the Bible, previously a banned book, became a "symbol of liberty to Filipinos" and owning one "was comparable to continuing the revolution, and had political overtones."[119]

In examining the specifics of Protestant mission and the arrival of the Bible in Mindanao, it is useful to divide our topic into two historical periods namely, the years of the American colonial government (1898–1946) and the post-war period of independence (1946–). This historical division also represents two distinct eras of Protestant mission. Protestant mission in the American era was governed by comity and involved the efforts of three agencies. In the post-war period, comity fell into disuse and a new wave of missionaries arrived in Mindanao.

Protestant Mission in Mindanao—the American era

When the first Protestant missionaries arrived in Mindanao in 1901, the island was governed by the military department of Mindanao and Sulu. As an island, it had never been conclusively pacified by the Spanish, and though in the second half of the nineteenth century they had eventually managed to contain the threat of Moro

[117] In 1919 the BFBS retired from the Philippines and handed over responsibility for translation work to the ABS. At the same time, the ABS retired from Korea and handed over translation responsibilities there to the BFBS. Cf. 115th Annual report of the BFBS for the year ending MCMXIX, 175, in Bible Society Archives, (henceforth BSA) BSA/G1/1/73.
[118] Frank C. Laubach, *The People of the Philippines: Their Religious Progress and Preparation for Spiritual Leadership in the Far East* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1925), 168.
[119] Anne C. Kwantes, *Presbyterian Missionaries in the Philippines: Conduits of Social Change (1899-1910)* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1989), 24.

raids from the sea, the Muslim population of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago had maintained a dogged independence from Spain. The paucity of settlers from other regions in the Philippines during the Spanish period, and the impenetrable topography of Mindanao out-with the coastal regions, also ensured the cultural isolation of Mindanao's non-Muslim *Lumad* communities. As well as the multitude of Moro and *Lumad* communities, a third cultural grouping that the Americans encountered were a mixture of settlers and *Lumads* who had embraced Catholicism and were living in towns and villages, mostly to be found at the southern tip of the Zamboanga peninsula and long the northern and eastern coastline of the island.[120]

In May of 1901, the north-eastern third of the island was separated off from the military department and organised into the two provinces of Misamis and Surigao. The rest of the island, along with the Sulu Archipelago, remained governed by the American military and became known as the Moro province. Leonard Wood, the first American governor of the Moro province, took a ruthless approach to dealing with what was perceived as a Moro insurgency threat and by 1909 Mindanao had been declared free of Muslim uprisings.[121] In 1913, government of the Moro province was moved to the newly created department of Mindanao and Sulu.

At the end of Spanish rule the population of Mindanao was estimated at slightly above 500,000 but during the period of American rule, settlement programmes resulted in a net migration to Mindanao from 1903 to 1939 of 1.4 million.[122] The

[120] T. Valentino Sitoy, *Heritage and Origins (1898-1948),* vol. 1, Several Springs, One Stream: The United Church of Christ in the Philippines (Quezon City: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1982), 288.
[121] For an account of this period of American government in the Moro province see: Wayne Wray Thompson, "Governors of the Moro Province: Wood, Bliss and Pershing in the Southern Philippines, 1903-1913 (Ph.D. Diss. For the University of California, San Diego, Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1975); Peter G. Gowing, "Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos, 1899-1920. (Ph. D. Diss. Syracuse University, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, Inc. 1968).
[122] Frederick L. Wernstedt and Paul D. Simkins, "Migrations and the Settlement of Mindanao," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 25, no. 1 (1965): 88-90.

majority of those who migrated were from the Visayan Islands north of Mindanao and their number was augmented by hundreds of thousands more in the post-war period. These settler communities quickened the pace of Mindanao's assimilation into the body politic of the Philippines and were responsible for Visayan eventually becoming the *lingua franca* for the majority of the island's populace. Their presence would also bring violent change and upheaval for the Moro and *Lumad* populations of Mindanao.

The Philippine Mission of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA[123]

The distinctive polity of the Episcopal Mission in the Philippines was shaped by their bishop, Charles Brent, and by the distinctively High Church tradition of the denomination. Brent was determined that the mission would never interfere with the adherents of other bodies, particularly members of the Roman Catholic Church. For this reason the mission restricted their activities for the most part to English-speaking people and 'pagans', the latter category encompassing the Philippines' Muslim and non-Muslim minority people groups who had not been evangelised by the Spanish mission. Brent was also averse to viewing mission as a means of rescuing people from hell and seemed at times to abjure the need for conversion.[124] For Brent, the need of the hour was for men who were willing to pass on their good gifts where the need is greatest and he put the founding of schools, colleges and hospitals at the centre of the Episcopal Mission's strategy. At the opening of the Zamboanga hospital in 1914 he declared, "A hospital is the one institution which is so inherently religious, both in motive and activities, that it is almost impossible to secularize it."[125] By 1940 the Episcopal Mission in the Philippines was maintaining

[123] Hereafter I will refer to this mission as the Episcopal Mission.
[124] "Likewise will the savage, who tries to live according to his lights, pass someday into God's good heaven, even if the church keeps her gospel only for home use." Charles Brent, *The Journal of the Third Annual Convention of the Missionary District of the Philippine Islands*, 1906, 25
[125] *Spirit of Mission,* April 1914, 274

21 schools for children, four dormitories, a vocational training college, a nursing school, two dispensaries and three hospitals.[126]

In Mindanao, the Episcopal Mission founded Holy Trinity Church in Zamboanga in 1903. Aside from their ministry to Americans living in the city, the Episcopal Mission was committed to reaching the region's Muslims and invested heavily in schools, dormitories and medical facilities in an effort to make an impression on the Moro. The bishop and missionaries of the Episcopal Mission repeatedly referred to these services as "paving the way for the introduction of Christianity."[127] The Episcopal Mission succeeded in converting very few Muslims but was more successful among the non-Muslim Tiruray people of Cotabato province. Leo G. McAfee became the first priest of what became the St Francis of Assisi Mission based in Upi in 1923. By 1940, there were 727 Tiruray members on the communicant roll of the mission while the baptism roll had over 3,000.[128]

Congregationalists with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions[129]

In 1901, the American Board's first missionaries to the Philippines, Robert and Gertrude Black, arrived in the eastern Mindanao city of Davao. The Blacks' early priority was preaching and Sunday school work, but by 1908 the Board had a missionary doctor in place and by 1913 a functioning mission hospital in Davao city.[130] The provision of medical services was augmented with a commitment to education, which gave birth to new schools in Davao in 1911. These were

[126] *The Thirty Second Annual Report*, 1940, 6-8.
[127] *The Fifteenth Annual Report*, 1918, 28.
[128] *The Thirty Second Annual Report*, 1940, 46. Tiruray adults were wary about being baptised while usually willing to allow it for their children.
[129] Hereafter I will refer to this mission as the "American Board."
[130] *Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, 1913, 191.

established outside the city both to provide for the children of the thousands of plantation workers and for the Obo Manobo living in the hills adjacent to the city.[131]

By 1925, the American Board also had a well-established presence in Cagayan de Oro, a city on the northern coastline. The Cagayan station replicated Davao with its hospital, schools and dormitories but it outstripped Davao in terms of the number of churches and congregational outstations developed. The station benefited from close proximity to the Silliman Bible School in Dumaguete, eastern Negros, founded in 1921 to provide training for Filipino evangelists and church workers.[132] By 1940, the American Board had 91 churches in Mindanao, and all but three of these were the fruits of their efforts within the Cebuano-speaking populace along the northern coastline of the island.[133] At this stage their influence among Mindanao's Lumads was limited to the few schools that had been created in the first decade for the Obo communities on the outskirts of Davao city.

In keeping with the policies of the C&MA and the Episcopal Mission, the American Board also opened a station to reach Moros. This task was assigned to Frank Laubach, a member of the American Board who went on to become the most celebrated member of the Mission in the Philippines. In 1929 he began a pioneering literacy programme among the Maranao Muslims around Lake Lanao in northern Mindanao. Though he saw very few Muslim converts, Laubach's natural enthusiasm for his task combined with the simplicity and replicable nature of his methods earned him the friendship of the Moros in Lanao and beyond, as well as an international reputation in the field of adult literacy.[134]

[131] *Annual Report of ABCFM, 1911*, 197-200.
[132] Cf. the website of Silliman University; http://su.edu.ph/colleges/divinity/.
[133] *Annual Report of ABCFM, 1940,* 191.
[134] Frank C. Laubach, *The Silent Billion Speak* (New York: Friendship Press, 1945).

The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA)

The C&MA chose the Muslim-dominated city of Zamboanga as a base from which to evangelise western Mindanao. As well as engaging in evangelism they followed the practices of other Protestant missions in the pre-war years and began schools for the education of young people from Muslim and Catholic backgrounds.[135] The C&MA schools were popular with local people and considered a success, but in terms of the ministry of making converts and establishing new churches, which was at the heart of their reason for being there, the C&MA had, after a quarter of a century, only seven churches with less than 300 members.[136]

In 1925, the C&MA leadership took steps to change the focus of the mission in the Philippines. Evangelism and church planting were reinstated at the centre of the mission's strategic priorities, the schools were phased out and the Ebenezer Bible School was launched in Zamboanga city for the purpose of training Filipino pastor-evangelists.[137] Following this reconfiguration of polity the C&MA experienced a surge in conversions and new churches. Work flourished amongst a *Lumad* group called the Subanon in what is now Zamboanga del Norte, and with the creation of a programme for training lay leaders, there followed a rapid multiplication of small churches. There were fifty-two of these small Subanon churches by the beginning of World War II. In 1928, some C&MA workers moved east into North Cotabato and began evangelising Obo Manobo communities. From 1928 to 1940 there were over 3,000 new members baptised in this region.[138] In the same period C&MA workers

[135] Rambo, *The Christian & Missionary Alliance,* 77.
[136] Ibid, 84
[137] Ibid, 86-89.
[138] Ibid, 141. The Obo Manobo are referred to as the Bagobo by some authors. The term Bagobo appears to have been an American invention and the preferred name today is 'Obo'. The Obo Manobo were the traditional *Lumad* inhabitants of the land around Davao city and to the south west around the slopes of Mount Apo. Today this area stretches over the municipal region of Davao City and the provinces of Davao del Sur and North Cotabato. In 1928 their homeland was within the single province of Davao.

were also able to evangelise and plant churches among the two large people groups of southern Cotabato, the T'boli and the B'laan.

A couple of factors contributed to the C&MA's success in church planting. Firstly, they were flexible as an organisation, able to change policies and improvise quickly. The closure of the schools in 1925 meant more missionaries were available to be itinerant evangelists; the missionaries were also willing to accept large movements of people into the churches, and they were open to flexible training programmes that equipped lay people to lead new congregations, thus supplementing the more formal training going on at Ebenezer. Secondly, they benefited from the immigration of many Protestant Christians to Mindanao from the Visayan Islands in the 1930s. Though most of these were Baptist, they opted to respect the comity agreement and did not try to begin Baptist churches. Joining Alliance congregations was the natural option for them in these circumstances.[139]

The C&MA differed from the Episcopal and American Board missions in that it was what has become known now in mission studies as a 'faith mission'. Klaus Fiedler defines faith missions as organisations that were formed, not primarily out of conflicts over liberalism in churches, but out of a concern for the millions of unreached and the need to evangelise these speedily.[140] This was to have been the C&MA's priorities in the Philippines and the changes noted above that were implemented in 1925, were done with a view to returning the Philippines-based C&MA workers back to the authentic goals and values of the Alliance movement.[141]

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[139] Ibid, 147

[140] Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1994), 125. Faith missions were also characterised by particular views on evangelism, holiness, eschatology and methods of support that made them distinctive from denominational or classical missions. For Fiedler's brief summary of the formation of the C&MA see page 41.

[141] Rambo, *The Christian & Missionary Alliance,* 88. Though the American Board were also committed to evangelism and conversions their most productive agents in this regard were Filipino co-workers. The majority of their American workers were committed to their hospital, dormitory and school projects.

Linked to this commitment to 'the lost' was the lack of interest by the C&MA in mission as a civilizing process, something which the Episcopal and American Board mission were committed to providing for Filipinos as part of their own commitment to the American project in the Philippines. The more 'spiritual' priorities of the C&MA would characterise their mission after World War II and that of OMF in their mission to the Manobo of central Mindanao.

The Bible's Place in Protestant Mission

Scripture distribution and evangelism using the Bible were priorities of the C&MA and American Board workers, but do not seem to have played a part in the work of the Episcopal Mission in Mindanao, either in Zamboanga or among the Tiruray. Upon arrival in Mindanao the C&MA missionaries made English and Spanish copies of the Bible available for sale to local people and read from the Bible as they preached in public or shared the gospel in homes. In a report from 1902, John McKee, the first C&MA worker to Mindanao, relates how he helped some missionaires in Luzon with evangelism and Scripture distribution before heading south to Mindanao. In one place he reports selling 200 copies of a gospel in Tagalog, as well as some Spanish Bibles and testaments. He would sometimes read, usually from the Gospel of John, to a gathered crowd and then, "…give the Gospel testimony in the Spanish tongue. Nearly always there would be a native who understood the Spanish and would translate it into the native language."[142]

David Lund, a C&MA missionary based in Zamboanga, simply describes his work as "preaching and Bible distribution," done by him and his wife with the help of "itineraries". They operated "along the coast and to an adjacent island."[143] Annette Holsted, believing that a convert could not grow if they did not read the Bible,

[142] J.A. McKee, "Shall the Moros Be Evangelized, or Shall an Unwise American Treaty Succeed in Shutting out the Gospel?," *Christian & Missionary Alliance*August 2 1902, 57.
[143] *Christian and Missionary Alliance,* September 10, 1910, 378.

initiated a literacy program for the Obo based on the programme designed by Frank Laubach.[144]

As a mission the American Board also declared that its primary duty to the Filipinos of Mindanao was to provide them with access to the Bible:

> The Protestant Church of America early saw its duty to the Filipinos. It promptly undertook to put into the hands of the people the open Bible— the groundwork and foundation of truth and greatness. The Congregational churches have become responsible for the evangelism of Mindanao.[145]

Preaching and distribution of Scripture was the core activity of the early American Board missionary, Robert Black. He is recorded as selling a "goodly number of Bibles and Testaments"[146] in 1904 and of selling 1,185 Gospels in a trip in 1907.[147]

Protestant Bible Translation and use of the Vernacular in Mindanao

The only consistent policy on the part of Protestant missions on Mindanao was their commitment to translating Scripture into the Moro languages of the island. In 1912, the Episcopal Mission was the first to get going with a translation of Luke's Gospel into the "Sulu" language or "Tausug" as it is known today, in Arabic script, with the help of the BFBS.[148] The intention was that translation of this gospel would be the beginning of translating the entire New Testament.[149] However, the idea of beginning translation of the New Testament for the Moro peoples was not

[144] Rambo, *The C&MA in the Philippines,* 139.
[145] *Annual Report of ABCFM, 1915*, 219.
[146] *Annual Report of ABCFM, 1904*, 132
[147] *Annual Report of ABCFM, 1907*, 154.
[148] "Report of the Committee on Moro Translation", in the *Journal of the Ninth Annual Convocation,* 1912, 16. This report contains reference to the BFBS' commitment to providing help for the Episcopal Mission's translation. Sulu/Tausug is an Islamic people group whose cultural centre is Jolo Island but who are also the dominant Muslim group of Zamboanga city, located at the southern end of the Zamboanga peninsula.
[149] In a letter from Brent on August 17 1912, to Tilden Eldridge, sub-agent of the BFBS in Manila he makes plain his enthusiasm for translating the entire New Testament into a Moro language. BSA/E3/3/384.

universally accepted as being a profitable idea by all within the Bible Society.[150] The Luke project also suffered serious delays and there is no evidence indicating that the gospel was ever widely distributed or that it gained credibility as an acceptable translation.[151] It was considered unreliable by A.M. Loptson, a missionary with the C&MA who moved to work on Jolo in 1928. His opinion and that of his co-translator, Captain Francis Link, was that the Moro assistants who worked on the Episcopalian translation "did not give the true meanings conveyed in the Christian Bible."[152] In light of this, Loptson and Link began their own translation of Luke's gospel into Sulu. Link and Loptson translated using the "Englishman's New Testament" and in 1931, their version of Luke's Gospel was finally printed by the ABS. Hess, writing in 1941, comments on the popularity of this Gospel among Sulu Muslims, saying, "The first edition is about exhausted having been sold throughout Sulu to a people who like to read and who hold the Arabic script almost sacred."[153]

The American Board likewise put some effort into a Moro translation. Frank Laubach set up a printing press in Lanao soon after he arrived in 1929 and one of the press's many publications in the Maranao language was the Gospel of Luke and Acts.[154]

A possible clue to why these mission agencies were preoccupied almost solely with translating Scripture into the Moro languages is provided in Hess's comments

[150] Dr Bondfield, agent for the BFBS in China, in a letter to Dr R. Kilgour at Bible House in London, on August 1 1913, advised inquiries be made on the possibilities of actually using translations in the Sulu dialect given the few missionaries at work in the Moro province and the "disturbed condition" of the region. BSA/E3/3/384.
[151] Minutes of the editorial sub-committee of the BFBS of May 14, 1930, page 8, record that "The printing of St. Luke in Sulu Moro . . . has evidently never been completed." BSA/C17/1/54-59. It was eventually completed and printed in the Arabic script. This author was able to locate a copy on the shelves of the BFBS library at Cambridge University.
[152] Robert Reuel Hess, "Mid Crucifix, Crescent and Shrine. Alliance Missions in Southern Mindanao," (Unpublished History of Alliance Missions in Mindanao and Sulu, 1902-1941), 20.
[153] Ibid, 20. Hess mistakenly writes that Loptson's translation of Luke was in Arabic script. It was in fact printed in a romanised script.
[154] Laubach, *The Silent Billion Speak,* 74.

above, that the Muslims are a people who "like to read." The Moro reverence for the Koran was possibly viewed by C&MA missionaries, and those of the other agencies, as analogous to Christians' devotion to the Bible, suggesting that a text-based approach to evangelism might be more appropriate in a Moro context. The Episcopalian Mission, though generally unwilling to engage in vigorous evangelism to the Moro population do seem to have viewed their translation efforts in similar terms, describing it as part of the "necessary preliminary work of Christianizing the Moros".[155]

When it came to evangelising lowland Catholics there was no uniform policy among the three missions in terms of Scripture or language use. The Episcopal Mission had disavowed evangelism to this section of the population while the C&MA missionaries appear to have been content with distributing Spanish and English Bibles and using interpreters where this was necessary.[156] In one article the writer, reporting on mission activity in Zamboanga, declared that, "there are six outstations where work is being conducted in both English and Spanish." In the same article, the need for a Bible school principal in Zamboanga was announced to readers: "It is desirable for the new man to learn Spanish, yet his ministry can begin immediately upon his arrival, for much if not all of the Bible Training School work will be carried on in the English language."[157]

The American Board missionaries, however, did not simply make do with English and Spanish Bibles for Cebuano-speaking Catholics in Davao and Visayan settler communities in northern Mindanao. Of the 1,185 Gospels that Robert Black sold in his trip referred to above, only 100 were English or Spanish, while the rest were

[155] *The Tenth Annual Report*, 1913, 64

[156] The exception to this is David Lund who is recorded as someone who preached outdoors in all weathers, speaking a "correct, though noticeably formal *Chavacano."* Rambo, *The Christian & Missionary Alliance,* 63. *Chavacano* is a Spanish-based creole language still spoken in Zamboanga today.

[157] *The Alliance Weekly*, June 27, 1925, 444. The name of the C&MA magazine was changed to *The Alliance Weekly* in 1911.

Cebuano, which would have been the mother tongue of these communities in Davao and northern Mindanao. Cebuano Scriptures appear to have been much more widely distributed and used by the American Board workers than English or Spanish. In addition, the training made available by the American Board for Filipino co-workers at the Silliman Bible Institute used the Cebuano language as the medium of education.

None of the three Protestant missions on Mindanao appear to have made Bible translation a priority for the *Lumad* populations they served.[158] Considering the extent of the C&MA ministry among Mindanao's *Lumads* this seems like a surprising state of affairs. In fact the C&MA missionaries generally seem to have eschewed the use of the vernacular *Lumad* languages or even Cebuano in their evangelism and preaching, preferring to use an English or Spanish Bible with interpreters (see above, page 56). Among the *Lumad* groups they appear to have opted for using the more thoroughly trained graduates from Ebenezer College in Zamboanga to conduct training courses for lay preachers; these graduates would have been fluent in Cebuano or perhaps a local language. The lay preachers being trained at these courses were only semi-literate and the training consisted of singing, Bible memorisation, doctrinal studies and then a sermon which "travelled far and wide as each reproduced it to his congregation."[159] However, it would not necessarily have been common for even the Filipino graduates from Ebenezer College to learn the Moro or *Lumad* languages of those they were evangelising. Mendoza, in describing the pioneering efforts of an Ebenezer graduate among the T'boli of southern Cotabato, makes the observation that he initially preached through interpreters

[158] The exception was C&MA missionary Annette Holsted who translated a copy of Luke's Gospel into Obo Manobo and a copy of John's Gospel into the Tagabawa language sometime before WWII. None of the C&MA books and documents which I have researched make mention of this translation though Ms Holsted and her evangelistic work is frequently referred to. I uncovered this piece of information in an interview with Vera Khor, SIL Translator for the Obo translation project, who has a personal copy of Holsted's Gospel of Luke in her home in Malaysia.
[159] Rambo, *The C&MA in the* Philippines, 136.

who understood the T'boli dialect.[160] According to Rambo, C&MA missionaries' apathy toward gaining fluency in any of the southern Philippine languages was down to a belief that English was destined to become a *lingua franca* for Mindanao.[161]

In conclusion, Protestant mission to Mindanao in the American colonial era witnessed the introduction of the Bible to the peoples of Mindanao. Owing to what appears to be a rather haphazard approach to Bible translation by Protestant missionaries on Mindanao, the Bible was only directly accessible to inhabitants of the island who could understand English, Spanish or Cebuano. For the island's *Lumads,* with whom this thesis is concerned, the Bible was mediated indirectly through the teaching of foreign missionaries or local evangelists. Their opportunity for direct access to the Bible would eventually come in the years following the end of World War II and the gaining of Philippine independence.

Protestant Mission in an Independent Mindanao

Mindanao's growth in population accelerated in the post-war period with an 87% increase, more than twice that of the national rate of 41%. More than one half of this increase was due to immigration (an actual number of 1,250,000 people) and issued in a population for Mindanao of around 5 million people by 1960.[162] The majority of post-war migrants to Mindanao came from the Visayan Islands, places with a high density of population but a shortage of available arable land. If land was the big attraction for migrants, then the process of acquiring land and becoming 'settled' was also aided by the Philippine government's road construction and improvement schemes. This had begun in earnest in 1936 and was continued after

[160] Mendoza, *The Philippine Christian Alliance,* 88. In his brief account of mission by an Ebenezer graduate on the Sulu island of Siasi, Hess also reports that the evangelist could not preach in the Samal language; Hess, *Mid Crucifx, Crescent and Shrine,* 24.
[161] Rambo, *The C&MA in the Philippines*, 188.
[162] Wernstedt and Simkins, *Migrations*, 91-95.

1945.[163] The huge influx of migrants eventually began taking its toll on the social fabric of Mindanao. By the 1960s, many of the new settlers, unable to pay loans, had become landless. The Muslims of Cotabato province also began reacting to what they saw as the increasing emasculation of their way of life by 'Christian' immigrants, with the result that new armed groups began to emerge in response to the social dislocation that Muslims were facing.[164]

When Ferdinand Marcos became president of the Philippines in 1964, the situation in Mindanao was becoming more volatile. Keen to exploit the island's abundance of natural resources and in order to avoid any disruption to major extractive industries, Marcos deployed the military to key trouble spots in Mindanao.[165] More than any of the other major extractive industries, it was commercial logging which expanded and flourished under the Marcos presidency. From 1950 to 1987, 36,000 km² of land was deforested in Mindanao, accounting for 45% of all deforestation in the Philippines in this period.[166] All of these developments brought massive social and environmental upheaval to the *Lumad* communities of Mindanao. The colossal deforestation of so much of Mindanao irreversibly disrupted their way of life and the network of national highways and logging roads opened up their homelands to Cebuano-speaking settlers who would acquire land and be the catalyst for additional social dislocation.[167]

These unprecedented levels of social and political turmoil in Mindanao have significance for the subject matter of this thesis. The deforestation of Mindanao and

[163] Ibid, 93.
[164] From 1903 to 1960 the Muslim proportion of the Mindanao population dropped from 31% to 20%. Wernstedt and Simkins, *Migrations,* 101.
[165] Patricio N. Abinales, *Making Mindanao: Cotabato and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation State* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000), 166.
[166] David M. Kummer, *Deforestation in the Postwar Philippines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 58.
[167] According to Hackenberg, some logging concessions constructed as much as 70km of road in order to extract lumber. Cf. Robert Hackenberg and Beverly H. Hackenberg, "Secondary Development and Anticipatory Urbanization in Davao, Mindanao," *Pacific Viewpoint* 12 (1971): 8.

the inflow of migrants to the highland areas brought monumental and irreversible change to *Lumad* communities. This change would in turn be a factor in inclining Manobos, along with other *Lumad* communities on Mindanao, to accept Christianity and the Bible, as a means of negotiating their place within the social structure of a new Mindanao. In addition, the increase in numbers of Visayan migrants eventually led to settler communities becoming the dominant cultural force on Mindanao and Cebuano becoming the *lingua franca* for the majority of the island. This, in turn, led to the ascendency of the Cebuano translation of the Bible, which now figures prominently in the Christianity practised by Manobo at the centre of this thesis.

The years following the gaining of independence witnessed the arrival in the Philippines of more conservative evangelical mission agencies from the US and beyond. These included missionaries from the Assemblies of God, Baptist General Conference, Conservative Baptist Mission, Southern Baptists and Evangelical Free Church Mission.[168] The Far East Gospel Crusade, New Tribes Mission, Overseas Missionary Fellowship, Campus Crusade for Christ and Inter-Varsity Fellowship are a sample of some of the independent non-denominational organisations which also began arriving in the post-war era. This change in the theological make-up of the missions reflected what had happened in the post-war United States with the evangelical/fundamentalist bloc gaining dominance within American Christianity. The resultant effect overseas was, as Richard V. Pierard points out, an increase in the number of workers from independent faith missions, parachurch bodies and societies operated by conservative denominations: in effect, “a conservative evangelical preponderance in overseas missions (chapter one, n. 16).”[169]

[168] Averell U. Aragon, "The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches," in *Chapters in Philippine Church History*, ed. Anne C. Kwantes (Manila: OMF Literature Inc., 2001), 370.
[169] Richard V. Pierard, "Pax Americana and the Evangelical Missionary Advance," in *Earthen Vessels : American Evangelicals and Foreign Missions, 1880-1980* ed. Joel A. Carpenter and Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1990), 158-59. The statistics which Pierard draws upon

Evangelism was the all-consuming priority for these post-war missionary sending bodies and they believed without question that this was the church's *raison d'être*. Social uplift or matters of social justice occupied a secondary place in the polities of these organisations and they distanced themselves from Protestant ecumenical bodies like the International Missionary Council (IMC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). Wilbert Shenk describes them as those who, "treated socio-political issues simplistically and interpreted the missionary call as the simple and unambiguous action of saving souls."[170]

The arrival of these groups gave birth to a dichotomy within Philippine Protestantism. In 1963, seven Protestant denominations in the Philippines formed an alliance of churches known as the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), which in turn developed strong links with the WCC. The post-war agencies from the US, not being amenable to fellowship with WCC-affiliated churches, formed their own alliance of churches, which in 1969 became known as the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC).[171] Whereas the NCCP developed a strong ministry of social development and activism, especially during the years of the Marcos regime,[172] churches affiliated with the PCEC prioritised evangelism and planting new churches. In the 1970s these PCEC-related churches were reinvigorated in their primary mission to evangelise and plant churches through exposure to the church growth principles formulated by Donald McGavran.[173] A particular paradigm of church planting called DAWN, was born out of American missionary James Montgomery's time doing research in the Philippines and his

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are taken from two editions of the *Occasional Bulletin of the Missionary Research Library:* 8 December 1958, 11 and 23 November 1960, 6.

[170] Wilbert R. Shenk, "The Great Century Revisited," *Missiology* 12 (April 1984): 142.

[171] Aragon, *The Philippine Council,* 375-77; See also Jun Vencer, "The Evangelicals in the Philippines: A Brief History of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches," *Evangelicals Today and Asia Ministry Digest* 21, no. 8 (1994).

[172] National Council of Churches in the Philippines-Research and Documentation Office NCCP-RDO, "Philippine Churches in the Search for Peace," *Tugon* 12, no. 1 (1992)., 160-161.

[173] Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970).

personal interaction with the theories of church growth (chapter one, n. 40). In 1981, the PCEC adopted the DAWN strategy of a church in every *barangay* by the year 2000 which resulted in the multiplication of evangelical churches nationwide.[174]

Most of the agencies that arrived after World War II placed workers and began evangelism in Mindanao. We shall examine two of them briefly, the Southern Baptists and the Free Methodists, but firstly we need to mention the ongoing mission of the C&MA in the post-war era.

In the post-war years, the mission of the C&MA in Mindanao continued to grow. In 1947 a National Alliance church was created which placed the leadership and decision-making of the churches into the hands of its Filipino members, and was named the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church of the Philippines or CAMACOP, as it is more popularly known today. In southern Cotabato, once again because of large numbers of migrating Visayan Protestants, CAMACOP were able to capitalise and begin more new churches by training leaders and evangelists quickly through the use of lay training institutes.[175] The ongoing growth and need for pastors within the CAMACOP *Lumad* churches of eastern Mindanao gave rise to the creation of the Mount Apo Alliance Bible School (MAABS) at Bulatukan in Cotabato province in 1959.[176] Today CAMACOP is a nationwide denomination with its headquarters in Manila. Nevertheless its heartland is still Mindanao. It has one post-graduate seminary which is located in Manila, but its undergraduate seminary is still Ebenezer in Zamboanga and five of its seven Bible colleges are also in

[174] A *barangay* is the smallest political unit in the Philippines and refers to a village or a village plus its outlying hamlets.
[175] Rambo, *The Christian and Missionary Alliance,* 193-195.
[176] Ibid, 244. MAABS was less demanding academically and initially the majority of students were elementary school graduates, 245.

Mindanao. It has six administrative regions across the islands, three of which are in Mindanao.[177]

Southern Baptist and Free Methodist missions in Mindanao

After World War II the comity agreement fell into abeyance, removing any restrictions on the sphere of operations for groups such as the Southern Baptists and Free Methodists. Southern Baptist missionaries arrived in Mindanao to begin work in Davao city in 1951 and by 1954 two associations of Baptist churches had formed on the island.[178] The Southern Baptists implemented policies and strategies very similar to those we listed earlier for the C&MA. They initiated the formation of a local association of churches in 1967 called the Mindanao Convention of Southern Baptist Churches,[179] a programme for lay leadership training[180] and assisted in the creation of the Davao Baptist Bible School which eventually became the Southern Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary.[181]

The Free Methodists restricted their activities to the north-east of Mindanao in the first couple of decades. They evangelised among the Agusan Manobo of the Agusan River basin and its tributaries, following in the steps of the Jesuits and Recollects before them. They also initiated lay leadership training with their Laymen's Family Institute begun in 1961[182] and founded a Bible School in Bunawan in 1955 which eventually moved to Butuan City and was named the Light and Life Bible College.[183]

Congruent with the theological outlook of the post-war missions which we discussed above, the Free Methodists and Southern Baptists were unequivocally

[177] These statistics are available on the official website, **www.camacop.org.ph**.
[178] These were formed at M'Lang in Cotabato province and in Davao City, under Filipino leadership. Cf. Terry, *An Analysis of Growth,* 67-68.
[179] Ibid*,* 70.
[180] Ibid, 71
[181] Ibid, 76-77
[182] John H. Schlosser, *Church Planting in Mindanao* (The Commission on Missions of the Free Methodist Church, 1964), 24.
[183] Ibid, 18-19.

committed to evangelism; this was their only reason for being in Mindanao. The Free Methodists did not introduce any major social action initiatives but the Southern Baptists built a hospital in Mati, Davao Oriental, and the Baptist Rural Life Centre (RLC) at Bansalan in Davao del Sur. The latter institution was designed to assist poor farmers among the Obo and Visayan settler communities to improve the productivity of their land and raise living standards. Nevertheless, both the hospital and RLC were considered by Southern Baptist missionaries as instrumental in aiding evangelism.[184]

The Southern Baptists and Free Methodists adopted the church growth principles developed by McGavran and Montgomery in 1971 and credit the principles imbibed at that time as responsible for the church growth they enjoyed in the 1970s and early 1980s. Terry's research reveals that by 1984, the Methodists had 66 churches and 7,300 members and the Southern Baptists 925 churches with around 43,000 members in Mindanao.[185] In short, Mindanao churches responded more industriously than other regions in the Philippines to the call for a renewed commitment to church planting and in the published DAWN research findings of 2001 the island had the highest evangelical church-to-population ratio of all the regional groupings.[186]

Southern Baptist and Free Methodist use of the Bible and vernacular languages.

If open-air preaching and Bible distribution was a popular Protestant method for evangelism in the pre-war decades then, if the Southern Baptists and Free

[184] Leonard Tuggy quotes Baptist missionary Leslie Hill as saying, "We started hospital work as a wedge for evangelism." Cf. Arthur Leonard Tuggy and Ralph E. Toliver, *Seeing the Church in the Philippines* (Manila: OMF Publishers, 1972), 63. Terry quotes an interview with Harold Watson, the founder of the RLC, who described the RLC as a "bridge to evangelism." Cf. Terry, *An Analysis of Growth*, 163.
[185] Terry, *An Analysis of Growth,* 81-94
[186] DAWN 2000, "DAWN Philippines: A Report on the State of the Evangelical Churches in the Philippines 2000", 22-24. This report contains no publication date.

Methodists are anything to go by, the methods preferred in the post-war period were open-air crusades and home Bible studies. The Bible was central to both methods. The Bible was read and preached from in the crusades to call people to a personal faith in Christ as saviour.[187] Crusades were sometimes nationwide, sometimes local affairs and were usually organised at intervals of two to three years. Home Bible study was the weekly means of evangelising, particularly among lowland Catholics.

Both Free Methodist and Southern Baptist historians credit the Second Vatican Council for creating a greater willingness on the part of Filipino Catholics to study the Bible in the atmosphere of a home.[188] Terry illustrates the freer atmosphere of the 1970s by reporting an incident in the pre-Vatican II years, when the Catholic priest in the town of M'lang, Cotabato, supposedly purchased all the Bibles and New Testaments in the Baptist book store to prevent Catholics from reading them.[189]

Both missions preferred to operate using the languages of English and/or Cebuano rather than local vernaculars. They produced tracts, materials for new converts and Bible studies in both languages. The lay training programmes of both missions were taught in Cebuano, but in their Bible colleges and seminaries, the medium was in English. English-speaking, visiting evangelists from the US were often used with interpreters, as speakers for their large crusades. The only nod towards the importance of *Lumad* languages was by the Free Methodists who sponsored a translation of Mark's Gospel and Acts into the Agusan Manobo language.[190]

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[187] Writing on the crusades sponsored by Free Methodists, Schlosser says that all preaching in English was translated into the vernacular. Schlosser, *Church Planting in Mindanao*, 13. Terry reports the same as being true for Southern Baptist crusades.
[188] Terry, *An Analysis of Growth,* 132; Cf. Robert & Carolyn Cranston*, Stars for the Baliti Tree: The Story of Free Methodist Missions in the Philippines* (Light and Life Press, 1983), 174.
[189] Ibid, 134.
[190] Cranston, *Stars for the Baliti Tree,* 117-118.

In concluding this section, the example of the Southern Baptists and Free Methodists reveals some similarities with the use of the Bible in the American era. The Bible was used in evangelistic activities and presented as the authoritative source of the missionaries, and local evangelists' message. Local evangelists were also being trained in the use of the Bible at institutions created by the foreign missionaries. Significant changes from the pre-war era were that crusades and home Bible studies were now the favoured means of evangelism; in addition, new converts were expected to have direct, individual access to the Bible and, Bible reading and study were presented as essential elements of Christian discipleship.[191]

Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF)

In concluding this chapter it is important to consider the roles of these two organisations – SIL, because of their contribution to making the Bible available in the mother tongue of Mindanao's *Lumads*, and OMF because of their pioneering mission among the Manobo of central Mindanao, from which has emerged MABCAM, the church association that provides the survey population for this thesis. Both organisations began service in the Philippines in 1951 and in essence were faith missions.

SIL

WBT-SIL was formed in 1942. As Aldridge points out, the "two organizations were individually incorporated" but had overlapping membership, identical leadership and a common commitment to Bible translation. "In effect the two organizations were simply one mission with a twofold character."[192] To the face of the public in the United States, the WBT was a conventional faith mission, while overseas the SIL

[191] New converts with the Free Methodists were instructed using the "Wheel of the Christian Life." The four spokes of the wheel were Prayer, Bible Study, Trust and Obedience. Cf. Schlosser, *Church Planting in Mindanao,* 15.
[192] Aldridge, *All Things to All Men.*

was a progressive organisation engaged in Bible translation, language surveys, literacy programmes and a host of other linguistic-related projects.[193]

SIL's importance for this thesis lies in the very nature of their *raison d'être*, which is to translate the Bible into the vernacular. On the Wycliffe website the organisation spells out what is perhaps their core value.

> "We believe that the Bible is God's Word to us — something that everyone should be able to understand in the language they understand best. But almost 1,900 languages around the world are still waiting for a translation project to begin."
>
> "That's why Wycliffe Bible Translators exists —to help these remaining languages get the Bible for themselves. And we won't stop until all people have God's Word in a language they understand."[194]

SIL were influenced by the linguistic and anthropological scholarship of men like Eugene Nida and Ken Pike. Nida was very influential in convincing missionaries and Bible translators of the importance of using the mother tongue in evangelism and in the translation of the Bible. In his 1961 book, *Bible Translating*, Nida declared,

> ". . . the closer the form of the Bible is to the speech of a people, the easier it is for them to understand it, and the more readily the message may become a part of their life. The Bible in a people's own idiom has a dynamic appeal to the inner thought and life.[195]

Upon their arrival in the Philippines, SIL quickly set up a translation centre in Mindanao. The centre was to serve workers who would translate the New Testament into the languages of the indigenous people groups of the southern Philippines. To date SIL workers have completed the translation of the New

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[193] Ibid. As per n. 29 in chapter one, the name SIL will be used when referring to activities in the Philippines. The term "Wycliffe" or the acronym WBT will be used when the context demands it, e.g. when citing from websites.

[194] https://www.wycliffe.org/about/why; accessed on November 10, 2015.

[195] Eugene A. Nida, *Bible Translating: An Analysis of Principles and Procedures, with Special Reference to Aboriginal Languages*, Revised edition (London: United Bible Societies, 1961), 32.

Testament into 27 of these languages and for a number of these, the translation of the Old Testament is currently ongoing.[196]

As the task of Bible translation progressed, the SIL leadership looked to partner with mission agencies whose priorities were evangelism and church planting. The partnerships were begun in the expectation that when these agencies began evangelising, they would make use of the vernacular translations that SIL personnel were producing. In the early 1970s SIL invited OMF to consider placing workers among the Manobo people of Central Mindanao where translation projects were already under way.[197]

OMF

OMF was previously known as the China Inland Mission (CIM), an agency that in many ways was paradigmatic for other faith missions.[198] When the CIM were forced to begin leaving China in 1949, the mission leadership decided to continue with mission to Chinese people in neighbouring nations within East Asia.[199] It was for this reason that CIM began work in the Philippines in 1951. In the decades that followed CIM/OMF responded positively to invitations to serve among non-Chinese people in the islands, a decision that eventually led to mission among the Manobo of central Mindanao. OMF's mission paradigm was very much aligned with the post-war agencies who had joined the PCEC and is exemplified in a 1976 report outlining their objectives in mission to the Manobo:

> Our aim is to introduce people, especially Manobo, to the Lord Jesus Christ so that they become his disciples, meeting together for worship, ministry of the Word of God, prayer and fellowship and thereby growing up into Christ and

[196] It is worthwhile remembering that SIL field workers are also responsible for the production of literacy primers and training schemes that have taught multitudes of Mindanaons to read. They have also produced alphabets, dictionaries and songbooks in the mother tongue for several of Mindanao's minority peoples.
[197] OMF Philippine Field Council Minutes, (1973), T 73-16.
[198] Fiedler claims that a faith mission is one "which traces . . . the origin of its principles directly or indirectly back to the China Inland Mission", *The Story of faith Missions,* 11.
[199] It was 1965 before the CIM changed its name to the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF).

> introducing him to others. We want to link such groups together so as to encompass the whole area, enabling them to accept responsibility for the total evangelisation of their tribesmen.[200]

A new team of workers arrived to begin mission among the Ata, Matigsalug, Tala-ingod and Tigwa Manobo in 1976. OMF workers prepared for service by learning Visayan and then moved out to live in Manobo villages and begin language learning. Written sources reveal that learning to speak Manobo was a priority for OMF missionaries among the Manobo. The importance of communicating the Gospel in the Manobo language is illustrated in this Field Council minute from 1977: "Ability in the Manobo Language was seen to be an essential prerequisite to effective evangelism and teaching. It was therefore felt that Manobo language learning should take top priority, even at the expense of a teaching ministry at this stage."[201] The Bible was indispensable to OMF workers' efforts to evangelise and plant churches among the Manobo:

> "I would like to give you a brief report on . . . two weeks there of basic evangelism and Bible teaching in people's homes . . . delighted with the interest people showed; listening for hours to Bible stories and truth and asking questions . . . Those "who continue in His word" are his real followers, Jesus said."[202]

There was also a definite commitment to using Manobo translations of the Scriptures.

> "For more than one year we went through Mark's gospel, till they had imbibed it very well, including the non-literate adults and older people . . . Also, the continued use of Manobo Scripture fed the new learners who were involved in the literacy classes . . . a good number of adults became literate in this way. During the first few years, one of the main reasons we stayed with the Manobo only, was that the leaders were happier to do so and it strengthened their identity as a Manobo group and maintained a distinction from the Visayan Pentecostal group. . . ."[203]

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[200] "Current Developments and Future Plans [Amongst] the Manobo." A Report for the OMF Area Conference, 1976.
[201] Mindanao Field Council Minutes, (1977), no 28.
[202] Missionary G, "Prayer Partner Letter," (July 1979).
[203] Email to the author from Missionary C, November 3, 2015.

Following ten years of evangelism and church planting, eleven congregations joined together to found MABCAM in 1985. A small number of OMF missionaries continue to serve with MABCAM which has grown to become an association of around sixty churches. The Bible is central to the lives of the members and congregations of MABCAM. Almost every member owns and reads their own Bible and the latter is read and preached at every Sunday worship service.

Conclusion

Christian mission to Mindanao is notable for some interesting ironies. The Spanish missionary friars were committed to evangelising and giving religious instruction in the indigenous languages of Mindanao's peoples but did not introduce them to the Bible. Protestant missionaries introduced the Bible immediately but lacked any clear and consistent understanding of the place of language and Bible translation in cross-cultural mission. A rush to translate the Bible into the Moro languages of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago was paired with an indifference about providing the same for Mindanao's *Lumads*; a stance which, for a long time, failed to make the Bible directly available to the island's non-Muslim peoples. In the post-World War II era of mission in Mindanao, however, *Lumad* Christians gradually gained access to the Scriptures, either in the *lingua franca* of the Visayan settler communities that increasingly encroached upon their homelands or in the vernacular, as the work of the SIL gathered pace. As already noted in our brief examination of the mission of the Southern Baptists and Free Methodists, the expectation on the part of Protestant missionaries in the post-war era was that believers would be individual readers and students of the Bible. Personal Bible reading, along with the emphasis on personal prayer can be viewed as common elements within a pietistic and individualistic style of discipleship that was typical of evangelical Christianity within the Philippines in these decades, accompanied also by a concomitant hesitancy about the relevancy of the Gospel to address social and political ills.

The focus of this thesis is on how the Manobo engaged with the Bible. How did they respond to having it available in their mother tongue? What did it mean to them that the Bible had spiritual authority and how did they actually interpret it? In order to get to the heart of these questions it is imperative that we have some understanding of how Manobo comprehend the world and what indigenous forms of authority have traditionally commanded their loyalty. In the following chapter, therefore, we shall examine the twin pillars of *Lumad* authority—Manobo cosmology and Manobo customary law.

Chapter Three. Manobo Cosmology and Customary Law

Graham Harvey makes the assertion that many traditional religionists "adopt the 'arriving' religion on their own terms, slotting it into an indigenous understanding."[204] Building upon this axiom, much has been written on Catholicism in the Philippines and its encounter with indigenous Philippine religiosity. Writing in 1981, F. Landa Jocano declares that farmers who perform rituals to secure the goodwill of "environmental spirits" were able to make these rituals "more pleasing to the supernatural powers" through the introduction of "saints, prayers and other Christian…paraphernalia such as the cross, palm leaves, holy water, etc."[205] What Jocano describes has been defined as "syncretism" by, among others, the distinguished scholar John N. Schumacher[206] but is now generally referred to as symptomatic of the "localization" of Catholicism within Philippine communities where traditional religious practices still provide the framework for worldview.[207] In comparison to the study of Filipinos' appropriation of Catholicism, minimal effort has gone into an equivalent study of the transactions between indigenous religion and Protestant Christianity in the Philippines – a lacuna that has allowed some Protestants to conclude rather facilely that the blending of indigenous religion with Christian motifs is essentially a Catholic issue, owing to the latter's overly accommodating attitude towards culture. Two exceptions to this are Jocano's study of Protestant Christians at *barrio* Malitbog on the Visayan island of Panay, done in

[204] Graham Harvey, "Introduction to Indigenous Religions," in *Indigenous Religions: A Companion*, ed. Graham Harvey (London; New York: Cassells, 2000), 4.
[205] F. Landa Jocano, *Folk Christianity: A Preliminary Study of Conversion and Patterning of Christian Experience in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Trinity Research Institute, 1981), 25.
[206] John N. Schumacher, "Syncretism in Philippine Catholicism: Its Historical Causes," *Philippine Studies* 32, no. 3 (1984). In an article that is germane to the theme of this chapter, Vincent Cullen defines the reception of Catholic Christianity by the Bukidnon of Mindanao as an "eclectic syncretism." Cf. Cullen, *Bukidnon Animism,* 3.
[207] John P. McAndrew, *People of Power: A Philippine Worldview of Spirit Encounters* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2001), 1-12. See also, Raul Pertierra, *Religion, Politics and Rationality in a Philippine Community* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1988).

the 1960s, and the more recent study by the Protestant theologian Melba Maggay on American Protestant missions' "clash," as Maggay describes it, with Filipino religious consciousness.[208] Both works illustrate that indigenous religious beliefs can also find a *modus vivendi* within a Protestant milieu.

In order for us to understand, with a degree of clarity, how Manobo culture has shaped how the Bible is viewed conceptually and how it is interpreted by Manobo Christians, it is imperative that we assign some space here for a brief presentation of the vital contours of Manobo culture and cosmology, paying particular attention to those elements that are pertinent to our study. This chapter will therefore begin with a brief examination of the legends that have emerged to explain the origins of the Manobo people and their current place as inhabitants of the highlands of central Mindanao. Space will then be given to consider Manobo cosmology, with special reference to the world of "spirit beings" which preoccupies the daily lives of Manobo communities and the role of the *baylan*[209] who mediates this world to ordinary people. Following this, we shall consider the importance of Manobo *batasan*[210] and the role of the *datu*[211] as the skilled interpreter of this body of tradition, and the one responsible for applying its precepts to situations which threaten to destabilise community harmony. Finally, we shall conclude the chapter with a brief assessment of how OMF missionaries evaluated these two major cultural complexes.

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[208] F. Landa Jocano, "Conversion and the Patterning of Christian Experience in Malitbog, Central Panay, Philippines," in *Acculturation in the Philippines: Essays on Changing Societies*, ed. Peter Gowing and William H. Scott (Quezon City: New Day Publishing, 1971); Melba P. Maggay, *A Clash of Cultures: Early American Protestant Missions and Filipino Religious Consciousness* (Manila: Anvil, 2011).

[209] *Baylan* is the Manobo term for the religious specialist traditionally referred to as "shaman" or "spirit priest" in English. The position could be held by a man or woman.

[210] This term refers to traditional Manobo "wisdom" or "law."

[211] *Datu* refers to a "chief" or "headman". The position, like that of *baylan*, could be held by a man or woman.

Manobo Origins

Twelve of Mindanao's *Lumad* people groups are considered Manobo, accounting for a Manobo population on Mindanao of around 400,000 and making them the largest *Lumad* language community indigenous to Mindanao.[212] The most widely accepted theory on the origins of Manobo communities in the central and northern highlands of Mindanao is Richard Elkins' "Proto-Manobo" theory. In his paper on the "Proto-Manobo word list" (see above n. 212), Elkins makes the case for an original Proto-Manobo language community that broke off into sub-groupings during the process of migration. Elkins' analysis leads him to conclude that because the northern Manobo languages of Kinamigin, Binukid and Cagayancillo do not display certain innovations in their language that are typical of other Manobo sub-groups, this indicates that these northern speakers broke away from the main body of Proto-Manobo first. He then makes the case, still on the basis of his linguistic analysis, for viewing the southern group as the next to break away, followed by the east-central group which eventually separated from the western.[213] Elkins' work has been critical for differentiating the Manobo family of languages from other linguistic groupings with the Philippines, but his observations on the differences between the Manobo sub-groupings have also contributed to theories of migration and why it is that the vast majority of Manobo communities are contiguous to one another within the central and northern regions of the island. In an unpublished manuscript, Elkins postulates the idea that the Proto-Manobo speakers were originally a pre-Islamic Malay population that settled on the southwestern coast of Mindanao near the mouth of the Rio Grande, close to what is now Cotabato city in the province of

[212] M. Paul Lewis, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig, eds., *Ethnologue: Languages of Philippines*, 19th ed., Ethnologue (Dallas: SIL International, 2016), 40-44, 52-53. The Ethnologue does not include the Binukid people of north central Mindanao on their list of peoples considered as Manobo. Linguistically speaking however, this group is considered a member of the northern subgroup of the Manobo family of Philippine languages; see Richard E. Elkins, "A Proto-Manobo Word List," *Oceanic Linguistics* 13, no. 1/2 (1974): 601-603. The Manobo population of Mindanao would then be 500,000 if we were to consider the Binukid population within the total.

[213] Elkins, *Proto-Manobo*, 635-38.

Maguindanao (see Figure 3). These then followed the Pulangi River east and north to the Bukidnon plateau from where the process of eventual separation into sub-groups was set in motion.[214]

If a common linguistic heritage signifies the interrelatedness of distinct Manobo peoples, their commonality as peoples is also traceable through the similarities evident in the numerous renditions of the Manobo epic. The epic, sometimes referred to as *The Mindanao Epic,* and sometimes as the *Agyu* legend, is recounted by each of the *Lumad* groups of central Mindanao. The multitude of renditions nevertheless has a common core of characters and motifs. The legend depicts the Manobo or Bukidnon ancestors living at the coast and having to respond to the intrusion of Islam or Spanish Catholicism. The response is not uniform, with some accepting the jurisdiction of the new rulers while others reject it. The latter move to the mountains in Mindanao's interior under the leadership of a hero called Agyu. Those who choose to move are oppressed by the new overlords and forced to pay tribute in the form of products from their own labour, such as rice and beeswax. In an attempt to gain relief from the autocratic ways of the new powers at the coast they continue to move farther into the interior and become more rooted in their ancient beliefs, receiving supernatural powers from the *diwata* (spirits), who help them, and eventually achieve immortality when they are lifted into the sky.

There are important differences between the various accounts of the epic. The Manobo version investigated by Elena Maquiso depicts the ancestors escaping from the depredations of Islamic intruders;[215] the Bukidnon account studied by Carmen Unabia records flight from the intrusion of Spanish, Christian authorities.[216] The

[214] Richard E. Elkins, "The Linguistic Prehistory of the Manobo Languages" (unpublished manuscript), 1973. The Pulangi River is the *name* given to the upper reaches of the Rio Grande.
[215] Elena G. Maquiso, *Ulahingan: An Epic of the Southern Philippines* (Dumaguete City: Silliman University Press, 1977).
[216] Carmen Ching Unabia, *Bukidnon: myths and rituals* (Quezon City, 2000).

variations notwithstanding, all *Lumads* of the central, northern highlands, whether Bukidnon, Higaunon or Manobo, agree on a basic outline of their own history:

> "All are agreed their people originated along the coast but retired to the interior seeking freedom from domination by coastal peoples. Whereas Manobo equate the trek inland with liberation from the Maguindanao to their south and west, Bukidnons equate it with redemption from the Hispanic influences to their north. In either case, the connection between the move to the mountains and retention of their own culture is a strong one."[217]

Commentators on the purpose of the epic highlight its importance as a text which affirms Manobo/Bukidnon/Higaunon identity over that of the intruders at the coast. The epic reminds them they are descended from the hero figure Agyu, and in their retreat to the hills they received a spiritual power that was a match for that of Islam or Christianity. Edgerton, whose study focuses on the Binukid-speaking Bukidnon, elaborates on the factors contributing to evacuation from the coast and postulates reasons that were more than just a response to the penetration of Islam and Christianity. He advances the idea that the development of a riverine state in northern Mindanao at Himologan, near present-day Cagayan de Oro, possibly left Binukid speakers in a "disadvantageous position" with Visayan settlers dictating the terms of trade at the delta and upriver.[218] Moving farther inland was the only way of avoiding entanglement in a state-forming authority that threatened to enslave and impoverish them.

This hypothesis of peoples moving into the highlands to avoid state-forming polities has been explored comprehensively in James C. Scott's study of the highland communities of the Southeast Asian massif and their relationship with contiguous nation states.[219] Scott's analysis of the upland communities of Southeast Asia, whose domain stretches from Central Vietnam to north-east India, leads him to

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[217] Ronald K. Edgerton, *People of the Middle Ground: A Century of Conflict and Accommodation in Central Mindanao 1880s - 1980s* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 25.
[218] Ibid, 26.
[219] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

assert that that upland communities make a political choice to live at the perimeter of state control. Non-state space, therefore, be it hill or forest, is a zone of refuge from state agents where people can avoid being captured as slaves, pressed into corvée or have their produce assessed and taxed. Life in the hills and forest, therefore, according to Scott, does not display "archaic traits of a people left behind, but devices to avoid incorporation and to stop concentrations of power in their midst."[220] Living in small communities of four to five households and practising swidden agriculture made them notoriously difficult to subdue and their crops almost impossible to assess for taxation purposes. Even their kinship patterns are designed so as to "divide and not be conquered."[221]

Though Scott focuses on a territory within mainland Southeast Asia, his conclusions can be applied within the Philippine context.[222] The elements of a culture that signify avoidance of state control in Scott's thesis can be found within Manobo communities, namely, a strong tradition of household autonomy, self-reliance, an anti-hierarchical ethos and shifting agriculture. The desire for autonomy and independence, along with a rejection of religious ideals that contradicted their traditional beliefs were very probably the confluence of factors that drove the ancestors of present-day Manobo communities into the central highlands of Mindanao. The Manobo status *vis-á-vis* state-forming societies is important for this study and can help to enlarge our understanding about Manobo's willingness to adopt Protestant Christianity and the Bible, something which will be expanded upon in chapter five. In brief, what we can say at this point is that religion, according to

[220] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 8
[221] Ibid, 32
[222] Scott for example, following the conclusions of F.M. Keesing and W.H. Scott views the Igorots of northern Luzon in the Philippines as a population that fled to the northern highlands to escape Islamic slave traders initially and thereafter the Spanish policy of reduction; Ibid, 137. Cf. Felix Maxwell Keesing, *The Ethnohistory of Northern Luzon.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962); William Henry Scott, *the Discovery of the Igorots: Spanish Contacts with the Pagans of Northern Luzon the Discovery of the Igorots: Spanish Contacts with the Pagans of Northern Luzon*, Revised ed. (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1974).

Scott, can be a device that assists in maintaining that distance from state-forming societies that hill peoples are anxious to maintain, in addition to providing them with a modern identity. This happens when hill societies adopt a "religious identity that is at variance with that of core state populations who have stigmatised them."[223] By becoming Protestant Christians and adopting the Bible, the Manobo have been able to negotiate a place for themselves within a global Christian community but at the same time maintain their difference and distance from the local state-forming power which is dominated by lowland Visayan settlers, is religiously Catholic and would like to assimilate the Manobo within their structures of power.

The Manobo Cosmos

Studies of the indigenous beliefs of Southeast Asian peoples in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries drawn from European sources, have generally been hailed as remarkable, not because of the outstanding diversity of beliefs and practices but for their similarities. East Asian peoples were reported as confronting a natural world inhabited by innumerable spirits. These spirits were characterised as having diverse personalities, some benevolent, some malign, but all requiring propitiation by offerings and the need for human experts who could help ordinary people negotiate this spiritual domain as it intruded into their own time and space.[224]

Spanish sources from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries provide a very valuable contribution to this landscape with priests and colonial officials committing to writing what they observed of the belief system of inhabitants in the *Islas Filipinas*. Antonio de Morga, a Spanish lawyer who arrived in the islands in 1595 and served as deputy governor, described the "natives" as worshipping the

[223] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed,* 319.
[224] Barbara Watson Andaya, "Religious Developments in Southeast Asia *c*. 1500-1800," in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia: From c. 1500 to c. 1800*, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 164-227.

devil using images of him which they kept in caves and homes, "where they offered them perfumes and odors [*sic*], and food and fruit, calling them *anitos.*" There are references to the worship of a yellow bird called *Batala* and the veneration of crocodiles. De Morga also makes special note of the absence of temples, religious apparatus in general and no sign of a professional class of priests connected with people's religious practice. He does, however, document the presence of certain "old men and women called "*catalonas*"" whom he derogatorily refers to as "witches," but who clearly functioned as mediators between ordinary people and their deities by making prayers and rituals on behalf of the sick and by performing divination.[225] The Spanish Jesuit Pedro Chirino's account of life in the islands, written in 1602, also mentioned *Batala* as being a bird but also as a deity considered to be "God the Creator" by the Tagalogs.[226] He also noted that people recognised *anitos,* "invisible spirits and another life" in addition to a separate class of spirits whom he classifies as "demons," because they are the "enemies of men, of whom they are in abject fear."[227] Like De Morga he observed the ubiquity of sacrifices and offerings made privately by families as needed and the roles of the mediums.[228] The relationship between *Batala* and other non-human agents operating in the unseen world was also succinctly outlined by an early conquistador, Miguel de Loarca, whose indigenous informants described *Batala* as "Lord of all," creator of "human beings and villages" and one who has numerous agents under

[225] Antonio De Morga, "Sucesos De Las Islas Filipinas," in *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, ed. Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904), 131-32.
[226] Pedro Chirino SJ, "Relation of the Filipinas Islands and of What Has There Been Accomplished by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus," in *BRPI*, vol. xii, 263-65.
[227] Ibid, 264.
[228] Chirino observes the use of the term *Catalonan* to denote the spirit-medium among Tagalog speakers, but the term *Babailan* for Visayans, Ibid, 268. This is still the term used for "shaman" today among Visayans and the Manobo; see above n. 209.

him called *anitos* who serve the world on behalf of men, each with their own particular function.[229]

This basic arrangement – of a supreme being distant and removed from a multitude of lower-ranking spirits – remains as a foundational worldview feature within Philippine Catholicism. Maggay, making reference to the chronicles of de Loarca, declares that, "This outlook has remained unaltered largely through the substitution of the figures of the Virgin Mary and the Saints in ancient fertility rites and festivals."[230]

However, when it comes to examining the Manobo cosmos and how Manobo communities interact with the world of spirit beings, it is not necessary to do so through the accretions of an established world religion. Anthropological studies of Mindanao's *Lumad* cultures began early in the period of American control when the Christianisation of many of these people groups had only just begun, if at all.[231] In fact, the late Catholic bishop, Francisco Claver, writing on his observations among the Tigwa Manobo in 1966-67, believed they had been relatively untouched by Spanish rule and by the "integrating efforts of successive government agencies."[232]

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[229] Miguel De Loarca, "Relation of the Philippine Islands," ed. Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, vol. Volume 5, *The Philippines Islands, 1493-1803* (1903-09), 171-73.

[230] Melba P. Maggay, "Towards Sensitive Engagement with Filipino Indigenous Consciousness," *International Review of Mission* 87, no. 346 (July 1998): 363. See also Charles J.H. Macdonald, "Folk Catholicism and Pre-Spanish Religions in the Philippines," *Philippine Studies* 52, no. 1 (2004). Macdonald suggests that, with a well-developed angelology, demonology and cult of the saints, Spanish Catholicism had, in fact, its own brand of polytheism, rather than a strictly monotheistic religion that was antithetical to pre-Spanish paganism.

[231] The following are three of the more acclaimed studies of the early decades of the American era. Garvan's work with the Agusan Manobo is still highly regarded and frequently referenced. Laura Estelle Watson Benedict, *A Study of Bagobo Ceremonial, Magic and Myth* ([New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1916). Fay Cooper Cole, *The Wild Tribes of Davao District, Mindanao*, ed. George A. Dorsey, Anthropological Series (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1913). John M. Garvan, *The Manóbos of Mindanáo: Memoirs of the National Academy of Sciences*, Tredition Classics Edition ed. (Hamburg: Tredition GmbH, 1931).

[232] Francisco F. Claver, "Dinawat Ogil, High Datu of Namnam: A Biographical Study of Datu Power among the Tigwa-Salug Manobo," in *Bukidnon Politics and Religion*, ed. Alfonso De Guzman and Esther M. Pacheco, IPC Papers (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture of Ateneo de Manila University, 1973), 51.

Christianity has, of course, been appropriated to a greater or lesser degree by the *Lumad* communities of Mindanao, but traditional rituals are still being practised by those who have not converted.

Belief in a supreme deity who is responsible for creation but only has a minor role in the day-to-day life of humans appears to be a common feature of many indigenous religions in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.[233] This corresponds with the worldview of the Manobo groups of central Mindanao and beyond who use a variety of terms for this highest of spirits within the pantheon.[234] Elkins draws attention to the general sense of this spirit's non-involvement in the affairs of the Western Bukidnon Manobo by pointing out that no rituals are ever directed to the Supreme Being. Cullen, meanwhile, describes the *Magbabaya* of the Bukidnon as one who "rewards and punishes" but nevertheless is "rather remote from human affairs."[235] One OMF worker's conversation with a Manobo *baylan* confirms this distinction between a supreme and remote being and those that are more local and "near." Equating Jesus with the "supreme being," the *baylan* concluded that —"Jesus is too far away to help. But our bantoy are near. We beat drums, they hear and then come and help us. This is much better than Jesus."[236]

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[233] Mark R. Woodward, "Gifts for the Sky People: Animal Sacrifice, Head Hunting and Power among the Naga of Burma and Assam," in *Indigenous Religions: A Companion*, ed. Graham Harvey (London & New York: Cassells, 2000), 228.

[234]Religious Studies Professor James Cox has written critically on how this evidence of a supreme being has been interpreted by researchers as evidence of primitive monotheism within indigenous societies. He concludes that it has often been promulgated as an idea for both theological and academic reasons. According to Cox, Christian theologians have been guilty of reading the evidence as a sign that indigenous people needed the "superior and advance revelation of God in Christian faith," while some anthropologists have read the same as evidence that religions are developing organisms that have evolved away from belief in a supreme being. Cf. James L. Cox, *The Invention of God in Indigenous Societies* (Durham: Acumen Publishing Ltd, 2014), 1-20. This thesis makes no attempt to interpret the "supreme being" motif in either of these directions.

[235] Richard E. Elkins, "Introduction," in *A Voice from the Hills: Essays on the Culture and World View of the Western Bukidnon Manobo People*, ed. Richard E. Elkins (Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines, 1989), xiv; Vincent G. Cullen, "The Spirit World of the Bukidnon," *Asian Folklore Studies* 27, no. 2 (1968): 18.

[236] Missionary G, Reflection on a "Talk with Su-al", March 1980

In accord with the chronicles of the early Spanish religious and adventurers it is the lower-ranking spirits with whom the Manobo are most concerned. These are known collectively as the *diwata* within Visayan cultures and within most Manobo communities on Mindanao.[237] It is the relentless overlapping of the *diwatas'* activities with those of the Manobo that leads Buenconsejo to declare that the Manobos' world is inhabited by the "supernatural" and "constantly swirls with an uncanny force."[238] Though attempts to produce a taxonomy of the multitude of *diwata* have been made by a number of researchers, reading these attempts leaves one mindful of the experience of Fay Cooper Cole, that "any attempt to understand or to describe the spirit world results in great confusion."[239] Attempts to categorise inevitably run up against the reality that the world of spirits is an amorphous collective of non-corporeal beings that defies the degree of certainty needed for the task of classification. They are what Buenconsejo calls "ontologically dynamic . . . forces in a state of flux."[240] Keeping this caveat in mind, we can nevertheless attempt a cautious outline of this spiritual domain, remembering that it is central to the indigenous religiosity of those in our survey population who eventually appropriated Christianity and the Bible.

Introducing the *diwata*

There is a category of *diwata* that have become known as "nature" or "environmental" spirits because they live in the hills, forests, rivers and streams. A sub-group of these is thought of as beneficent but must be called upon by humans when the latter intrude upon the natural world to take from it, namely, when they

[237] Cf. McAndrew, *People of Power,* 13, for use of the term *diwata* within a Visayan context.
[238] José S. Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts at the Frontier: Person and Exchange in the Agusan Manobo Possession Ritual, Philippines* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 90.
[239] Fay Cooper Cole, *The Bukidnon of Mindanao*, ed. Paul S. Martin and Lillian A. Ross, Fieldiana: Anthropology (Chicago: Chicago Natural History Museum, 1956), 89. McAndrew's book contains an attempt to schematize the spirit world of Visayans while Buenconsejo's study contains an admirable effort to do the same with a Manobo belief system.
[240] Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 104.

clear land for a swidden, hunt or trap land animals and when they fish in rivers and lakes.[241] Another sub-group of these environmental spirits, who also live in the countryside, are not considered benevolent and may "stick" to humans if the latter should recklessly intrude into a spirit's abode without showing due respect. These beings like to live in *Balete* trees (*ficus*),[242] bamboo groves, waterfalls, near large rocks or cliff faces; accidental contact with them always has consequences for humans, usually in the form of illness.[243]

Another class of *diwata*—those known as "familiar spirits"[244] or "*bantoy"* in Manobo—are characterised as having a liking for humans and as able to form lifelong relationships with individuals within a family for generations. Once established within a family, *bantoy* are invited to specific rituals and allowed, as Buenconsejo puts it, "to intrude right into the core of human habitation" by possessing, when invited, the bodies of those people with whom they have formed a special relationship. They can assist in curing diseases and helping to find things that are lost.[245] Buenconsejo has devised a category of those spirits whom he describes as unsociable, because their only intention, *vis-á-vis* humans, is to destroy relationships. These are never consulted by people and never invited to participate in rituals within homes.[246] We shall briefly consider this category of spirits later in the chapter.

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[241] These "patron" spirits usually have names. Some names which commonly appear in literature and which this author has frequently come across in conversations are: *Ibabasuk*—the spirit responsible for planted crops; *Alimugkat*—the owner of water life; *Mamalayag*—the owner of wild game. Cf. Elkins, *Introduction, xii;* Garvan, *The Manóbos*, 404-07; Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 107-08.
[242] The *Balete* refers to any of several species of strangler tree.
[243] This grouping of spirits are classified as *busao* by Elkins (*Introduction,* xii); Buenconsejo rejects this classification, preferring to view *busao* as only one type of environmental spirit (*Songs and Gifts,* 108). Cullen calls them the *timamanuwa* and sees them as equivalent to the Visayan *engkantu* (*The Spirit World,* 20). Cf. McAndrew whose description of the *engkantu* matches this subgrouping of *diwata* (*People of Power,* 48-50).
[244] These are translated as "*abyan*" in Cebuano or "*tumanud*" in some Manobo dialects.
[245] Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 114.
[246] Ibid, 101-03.

Though not spirits in the strictest sense of the term, it is important to include the human soul among other-worldly beings that living humans must interrelate with. The soul is believed to be that part of a person that is active in dreams. It can uncouple itself from the body and wander off, something that will cause weakness and lethargy in the person concerned until it is encouraged to return by a *baylan*.[247] However, the souls of those already deceased are what usually pre-occupy Manobo. These have the power to return and exert power over the living. They can appear in dreams or through a *baylan* who will speak with the voice of the deceased. They may wish to share a message they were unable to communicate before they died or even express their disappointment at how their burial site is being neglected. Souls can also become lonely for a family member still alive, such as a young child, and approach the child with a view to taking him/her back with them.[248]

This brief synopsis of the types within the world of the *diwata* is sufficient to inform us that differentiation is possible for these beings but that it is also difficult to do so with any degree of precision. For example, most researchers regard the *busao* as a malevolent spirit. Buenconsejo describes it as "an evil bloodthirsty spirit that sticks to people and causes anger and fits of personal rage."[249] Elkins classifies it as a "ghoul spirit… obsessed with a ghoulish lust for the blood and bodies of humans…"[250] and Garvan declares them to be "hideous spirits and the implacable enemies of man."[251] It is hard to understand why *busao*, considering their rather

[247] Cole, *The Bukidnon,* 92. Francisco R. Demetrio, "Shamans, Witches and Philippine Society," *Philippine Studies* 36, no. 3 (1988): 374.
[248] Tano Bayawan, "The Travels of the Soul after Death," in *A Voice from Mt. Apo: Oral and Written Essays on the Culture and World View of the Manobo*, ed. Ena E. Vander Molen (Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines, 2005), 57. Cannell, in her study of Bicolano healers in southern Luzon also reflects on the "permeability of barriers" between the dead and the living. She claims that the dead can pity the living, such as a grandparent a grandchild. The dead may also have unfinished business with the living such as an unmarried daughter. Cf. Cannell, *Power and Intimacy,* 162-63.
[249] Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 106.
[250] Richard E. Elkins, "Blood Sacrifice and the Dynamics of Supernatural Power among the Manobo of Mindanao: Some Missiological Implications," *Missiology: An International Review* XXI, no. 3 (July 1993): 327.
[251] Garvan, *The Manóbos,* 83.

grisly cravings, are not then considered as spirits in the "unsociable" category, rather than mere "environmental spirits." Also, though *bantoy* are differentiated from environmental spirits, Buenconsejo is forced to concede that though he considers them as spirits "bound" to a place within nature, they can in fact be "unbound" and become *bantoy*.[252]

Understanding the dynamic between people and the *diwata*

The *diwata* are spoken of as the "*konon iling kanta"* by Manobo or as the "*dili ingon nato"* by Visayans. In English the expression literally means, "Those not like us" and strikingly illustrates how both Visayan and Manobo cultures view the *diwata* as distinctly different from people and inhabiting a separate domain. Nevertheless, the Manobo and the *diwata* inhabit the same cosmos and the boundary between the domains is extremely porous, making possible a dynamic interrelatedness which constitutes what religious studies students might term indigenous Manobo religion. When clearing a section of forest for planting, or when organising a hunt or fishing trip, Manobo will pro-actively interact with the spirits concerned. The same goes for their pleas with the souls of the dead to continue on the journey to their new home and not return to interfere with the living. However, the greater proportion of Manobos' encounters with *diwata* or souls of the dead are unsolicited. As already recorded, if humans are careless while passing through the fields, forests and rivers, they may inadvertently damage or even destroy the habitat of a *diwata*.[253] The spirits mentioned above, responsible for planted crops, wild game or water life may also show their displeasure with humans who have not fulfilled their obligations in obtaining food from the mountains and forests, as can the souls of dead relatives,

[252] Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 104.
[253] McAndrew, *People of Power,* 49. Tano Bayawan, "The Curative and Supernatural Power of a Spirit Medium," in *A Voice from Mt. Apo: Oral and Written Essays on the Culture and Worldview of the Manobo*, ed. Ena E. Vander Molen (Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines, 2005), 141. Buenconsejo points out that spirits can be upset by noisiness which may cause them to strike a person. The risk of an encounter is also greater at liminal periods of the day when spirits are likely to be on the move. Cf. Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 99.

already discussed above. The displeasure of these spirits usually manifests itself with illness inflicted upon the one who has transgressed or on a member of their family.[254]

As a general rule, Manobo are afraid of the intrusion of spirits into their world. There is always the risk that spirits will overwhelm humans, an experience that is likely to cause harm. For this reason an individual is usually reluctant to acquiesce in the friendship of a *bantoy*, a process essential to becoming a *baylan*. The individual concerned is filled with a sense of dread and experiences what McAndrew calls "initiation illness."[255] Elaborating on this as it pertains to Bicolano healers, Cannell interprets the prospective medium's reluctance as an awareness of the darker side of having a *bantoy*. The medium knows that the spirit would ultimately like to take its human companion back to the spirit world.[256]

Ritual is vital to ensure a balance is established between people and *diwata* and essential to this is the role of the *baylan.* The *baylan* is called to the role by the spirits, who, according to Demetrio, wish him or her to act as their intermediary with the world of humans.[257] Invariably a *baylan* is also viewed as a mediator by fellow Manobo, being in Garvan's words, the one "through whom they transact all their business with the other world."[258] *Baylans* perform a large proportion of their duties through the aid of their *bantoy*. Assistance on the part of the latter enables the *baylan* to analyse the cause of illness in a patient, i.e. what kind of spirit

[254] OMF Missionary D records being warned by a Manobo about digging in a flower bed near her home and being told she might get "bitten by a *busao*." Missionary D, Prayer Partner Letter, September 1978
[255] McAndrew, *People of Power,* 29. Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 112. See also the reference to sickness at initiation in Demetrio, *Shamans,* 375.
[256] Cannell, *Power and Intimacy,* 96.
[257] Demetrio, *Shamans,* 374.
[258] Garvan, *The Manóbos,* 421.

encounter precipitated the malady, where did it occur and what might be an appropriate offering to mollify the offended *diwata*.[259]

Buenconsejo's study is instructive in helping us understand when and why possession of the *baylans* by their *bantoy* is necessary. In effect, the *baylans'* possession by their *bantoy* is needed when spirits and/or the souls of dead relatives make intrusions into the domain of humans. These incursions are viewed as attempts by the spirits and souls to possess the habitation of people, something that can be fatal for humans and is usually manifested through illness, fits of rage or lust and/or epidemics. According to Buenconsejo, this act of possession by the spirits is dramatised by the possessed *baylan* in order to counter the force of unwelcome spirits and souls of the dead. These rituals also involve the offering of food to the *diwata.* Betel chew, something commonly shared by Manobo with each other, is offered in a number of the rituals as are eggs, cooked rice, chicken and a slaughtered pig.[260] OMF missionary G, records experience of a spirit offering that was occasioned by a neighbour's sick relative. A local *baylan* was invited to effect healing through his *bantoy*. A betel chew was prepared and placed in a dish, "for the bantoy that would come . . . Then the chicken was offered and the blood applied to the sick lady." The missionary described the *baylan* as "praying to his familiar spirit" and after the spirit had entered him, "he became very excited, even screaming aloud at times."[261] The occasion for the ritual dictates what kind of food is offered, whether it is cooked or not and whether people share in the food that is offered to the *diwata*. Though the rituals can serve the purpose of driving

[259] Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 130. McAndrew, *People of Power,* 35-36.
[260] The Betel chew consists of a nut from the areca palm (*areca catechu*) which is cut into pieces, then wrapped in a betel leaf (*Piper Betle*) and chewed, sometimes after being sprinkled with lime. Cf. Garvan, *The Manóbos,* 129-131.
[261] Missionary G, Reflection on "The Baylan", undated.

unwelcome *diwata* away from the society of people, the purpose can also be to fulfil ritual obligations to a kin group's *bantoy*.[262]

The role of the medium, however, is not required when Manobo relate to what we have termed "environmental" spirits above, namely those considered the guardians or even "owners" of wild game, water life and crops planted in a swidden. These *diwata* do not threaten to possess the human domain and, in fact, it is the Manobo who on these occasions are the intruders into the territory of the *diwata*. Knowing this, the Manobo, in this context, simply greet the spirits and make offerings from their harvest as a way of acknowledging those they believe to be the true owners of the world which they have entered to take food: "Manobos are very much aware that the life they take over—the life of harvested rice, game, and so forth—is not theirs but from the supernatural, so that the rituals within this domain do not need 'possession'".[263]

This firm belief, that *diwata* provide what is essential for life is important for our thesis as we contemplate, in a later chapter, how Manobo understand the character of the Christian God. Buenconsejo is a useful guide in reflecting on this via his study of the performance of Manobo stories and how these provide for the listener an outline of the Manobo cosmos. In one story which Buenconsejo has entitled *The Creation of the Cosmos,* a mythical couple of sibling children are juxtaposed with a mythical older couple.[264] Both couples are approached by an old woman who asks

[262] Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 119. For a detailed study of a *haklaran* ritual, where cooked food is offered to the *bantoy* and then shared with the gathered kin, cf. Augusto B. Gatmaytan, "The Hakyadan of Froilan Havana: Ritual Obligation in Manobo Religion," *Philippine Studies* 52, no. 3 (2004).
[263] Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 118-19. For material from Manobo authors on the importance of ritual for farming and hunting see Tano Bayawan, "Farming," in *A Voice from Mt. Apo: Oral and Written Essays on the Culture and Worldview of the Manobo*, ed. Ena E. Vander Molen (Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines, 2005), 79-91. Also, Francisco Col-om Polenda, *A Voice from the Hills: Essays from the Culture and Worldview of the Western Bukidnon Manobo People*, trans. Richard E. Elkins (Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines, 1989), 89-97.
[264] Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 34-38.

to be pitied and to be given some food. The older couple, who have plenty of food in the form of cooked pork, reject the old woman's pleas for mercy. In contrast, the children, who have only water, offer hospitality to the old woman who then reveals her supernatural powers by turning the water into delicious food, at which point she is also transformed into a beautiful maiden. In short, the story encapsulates the new cosmos emerging out of chaos. The children leave with the maiden to live in the forest, the symbol of habitation, while the older couple turn into crocodiles and drift downriver to the periphery of human habitation.[265] Central to this story is the creation of a cosmos through the other-worldly power of the old woman, but crucial also to the narrative is her relationship with the children which, according to Buenconsejo, "embodies proper human conduct, i.e. pity and the act of sharing."[266] The older couple who have become crocodiles and drifted off to the sea, eventually become separated from one another at the fringe of human habitation. Their lack of generosity and inability to show pity "breaches the social contract and the imperative to relate properly with the supernatural."[267]

A second story studied by Buenconsejo, entitled *The Rice, Pig and Betel Nut*[268] features two married brothers. The wife of one brother approaches her brother-in-law to ask for food but is refused and shamed by her affine's rebuff. Her husband then goes off to hunt for a wild pig in the forest that is destroying his crops. While hunting he encounters a beautiful maiden who provides him the pig he is hunting and a single grain of rice which miraculously multiplies when cooked. Vital to this story is that the maiden arrives to help the hunter out of pity, moved by the shame he and his wife endured at the hand of his brother. The maiden also instructs the man to share betel chew with his wife and his brother and to provide his brother with some of the pig meat. According to the story, the brother rejects the gift which

[265] Ibid, 39-43.
[266] Ibid, 41.
[267] Ibid, 42
[268] Ibid, 44-57.

is offered by the hunter's wife upon his return. As with the previous story on the creation of the cosmos, the world of the *diwata* provides for the Manobo and this continued provision is predicated upon the qualities of sharing, reciprocity, and sociability.[269] The brother who does not show pity and rejects the request for help from his sister-in-law, and then also the gift of food from the same, acts as a foil to the behaviour of his brother and sister-in-law. He does not recognise the qualities that the cosmos should be built upon, i.e. interdependence between kin and affinal relations characterised by compassion, pity and generosity.[270]

In summarising this dynamic between Manobo and the *diwata* we find ambiguity and paradox at its heart. Manobo myth and practice acknowledge that the *diwata* provide for people's needs. The Manobo who prepares a swidden or hunts for game asks for success and gives thanks, with offerings for the same. In addition there is an important ethic at the nexus of this relationship. Sharing, reciprocity, and generosity are central to maintaining the stability of a relationship between Manobo and *diwata* and within the cosmos itself. That which is taken from the forest, river or swidden is to be shared with kin and spirit alike. This keynote of sharing emerges from the relevant literature. The Manobo author Polenda describes the offering made after a successful hunt to the kindness of *Lelawag,* but adds that when a hunter returns home he must give some meat to all who come to greet him. For this he will not take any money; to sell meat which he did not buy would be a "sin."[271]

[269] Ibid, 63

[270] Affinal relations are considered as kin within the Manobo kinship system and obligations to one's in-laws are as binding as those to one's own blood relatives. After marriage, matri-local residency is imposed upon the newly-weds and the new husband must live for a period, in obedience to his father-in-law. Cf. Arsenio E. Manuel, *Manuvú Social Organization*, 2000 ed. (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2000), 56-59.

[271] Polenda, *A Voice from the Hills,* 97-97. *Lelawag* is the name of the *diwata* considered as guardian of wild game among the Western Bukidnon Manobo.

Cole writes that even on an evening when as many as three deer were killed in a night's hunting, "all the meat was consumed by villagers within a few hours."[272]

Notwithstanding this demonstrable ethic of sharing and sociability, Manobo avoid absolutising the munificence and kindly qualities of the *diwata*. The alarming reality for the Manobo is that when these beings interact with humans their presence is threatening and has the potential to overpower. This paradox is exemplified in the Agusan Manobo story of *The Rice, Pig and Betel Nut* studied by Buenconsejo. The pig presented to the Manobo hunter by the other-worldly maiden was the same pig that had been destroying the hunter's crops, a detail within the narrative that vividly illustrates the potential of the spiritual domain to act as both bane and blessing. According to McAndrew the rituals, done in response to those who suffer calamitous encounters with *diwata*, are performed as, "a technique for re-establishing the proper relationship between the participant and other beings, human or non-human, in order that a more favourable balance of power may exist".[273]

Cannell, in her study of relationships within a *barangay* in Bicol, perceives power at work where the weak and the powerful always have the potential to affect each other and where "the hope of those who have nothing is always that the gap between the two parties may be somewhat lessened."[274] Cannell applies this to contact with "supernaturals" and the potential for people to either experience a depletion or augmenting of power through such encounters.[275] At risk is an individual's dignity, the threat of being reduced as a person, something that happens to the woman who suffers rejection from her wealthier brother-in-law in

[272] Cole, *The Bukidnon of Mindanao*., 46. See also Garvan who affirms this practice of sharing freshly caught game between hunters and those back in the village. "Thus a wild boar," says Garvan, "is sufficient for just about one meal." Garvan, *The Manóbos,* 181.
[273] McAndrew, *People of Power,* 39.
[274] Cannell, *Power and Intimacy*, 25.
[275] Ibid, 230.

The Rice, Pig and Betel Nut. Within the Manobo context on Mindanao and the Bicol context on the island of Luzon, what the weaker person appeals for therefore, is 'pity' and the right to be treated with dignity by the supernatural and one's fellow humans.[276]

Aswang, Sorcery and Amulets

The threat of being overwhelmed by the power of the *diwata* is an ongoing reality that Manobo can counter through the mediating role of the *baylan* and his/her ability to invite possession or advise on appropriate offerings. There are, however, other forms of power over which the *baylan* cannot exercise influence. Earlier in this chapter reference was made to an unsociable group of spirit beings whose intention was only to destroy relationships within the world of humans (see above, page 86). While living in Mindanao, one such creature within this category which this author heard mentioned more frequently than any other was the *"aswang."* Known as the "*wakwak"* within the Manobo cosmology, the *aswang* is a viscera-sucking creature, a shape-shifter, which emerges at night looking for food.[277] By day it may be an ordinary man or woman but changes into the *aswang* at dusk when it flies off to look for prey. Its preference is for pregnant women or individuals who are weak through illness. [278] Localised accounts of an *aswang's* behaviour can mean variations on the creature's behaviour but it is probably an *aswang* that is referred to when missionary C says that, after admiring a large bird that flew through the village at dusk, they were told to be careful because the bird was "looking for a child's head to eat."[279] *Baylans* are not usually consulted for dealing with *aswang* and the latter are never called upon to possess a *baylan* or invited to attend rituals

[276] Ibid, 233-34.
[277] This author has opted to use the Tagalog term "*aswang"* to denote this creature because it is the most frequently used within the relevant literature. The Cebuano word "*ungu"* is rarely used in writings on the subject and the same goes for the Manobo "*wakwak."*
[278] Maximo Ramos, "The Aswang Syncrasy in Philippine Folklore," *Western Folklore* 28, no. 4 (1969): 240.
[279] Missionary C, "Prayer Partner Letter," (October 1979).

within homes. In short, the *aswang* are considered an "evil" category of spirit being who are not handled in the conventional manner.

Sorcery is often classified as a form of malign magic within the Philippine context.[280] A sorcerer is someone who can direct power so that pain, illness or even death is inflicted upon another person. The power of a sorcerer is usually put to work on behalf of a client, who pays a fee to settle a personal grievance with a perceived enemy. McAndrew has classified two methods of sorcery; one which uses an agent such as an insect, poison or a malign spirit to attack the intended victim and another which functions by using a representation of the intended victim such as a hair sample or a small amount of bodily fluid.[281] The signs that someone is suffering from the attack of a sorcerer are abdominal swelling, pain and/or haemorrhaging.[282]

Sorcery can be cured through the skills of a traditional healer. Polenda outlines the preparation of an antidote for sorcery using certain herbs which are gathered in the forest. The antidotes, according to Polenda, are given by people, upright in character, who enjoy the help of certain spirits in putting together a cure.[283] This is in line with the general statement made by Buenconsejo that there is a special method for curing sorcery that often "requires the ingestion of liquid antidotes made from a variety of boiled herbs, roots and barks of trees . . .". Buenconsejo contrasts this with the sicknesses caused by a *diwata* which require the services of a *baylan* and his *bantoy* for healing. [284]

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[280] Polenda calls it the use of "malicious supernatural power": Polenda, *A Voice From the Hills,* 128.
[281] McAndrew, *People of Power*, 83. Polenda's section on sorcery includes details of these methods, Ibid, 128-131.
[282] Richard W. Lieban, "Sorcery, Illness and Social Control in a Philippine Municipality," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 16, no. 127-143 (1960): 138-39.
[283] Polenda, *A Voice From the Hills,* 130.
[284] Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 91. See also the essay by Bayawan on the use of medicinal plants to cure someone who has been poisoned using a curse, a clear reference to sorcery. Bayawan, *The Curative and Supernatural Power,* 143.

The distinctive methods for curing sorcery-induced illnesses and the lack of need for a possession ritual suggests an entirely different category of power at work within sorcery than that encountered through the world of the *diwata*. The power of the *aswang* or "witch," as the creature is sometimes labelled in English, also contrasts with that of the *baylan*. Demetrio's comparative study of the "shaman" and the "witch" is designed to make this point and he concludes that the shaman is someone who can work for the benefit of the community in which he lives, while the witch is someone "inured to evil . . . and aims only at doing what is destructive of life and moral and natural goodness."[285] Polenda also underlines the positive role that a *baylan* plays, portraying him/her as someone who teaches people to avoid what is evil, to help those in difficulty, to share with those in poverty and not to retaliate against their enemies but rather to treat them kindly.[286] The salience of this distinction comes from its relevance to efforts at Christianising the Manobo and other *Lumad* groups within Mindanao. Agents of Christian mission have tended to merge the *diwata* complex with that of the *aswang* and the sorcerer and classify them all as practitioners of witchcraft and/or dark arts. Buenconsejo is at pains to stress the point that Manobo themselves are cognisant of a distinction between the *diwata* on the one hand and sorcerers and *aswang* on the other.[287] This author's examination of OMF missionary archives revealed that missionaries recognised the Manobo distinction between "good" and "evil" *diwata*. Missionary D writes, "The Manobos' life revolves around their belief in and fear of, the spirit world. Some spirits are good and some are evil, but the Manobo live constantly in fear of such. They fear the capriciousness of the evil ones and fear offending the good."[288]

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[285] Demetrio, *Shamans, Witches,* 380.
[286] Polenda, *A Voice From the Hills,* 121. Bayawan also comments on the expectation that a *baylan* be someone who exemplified good character and taught it to others. Cf. Bayawan, *The Curative and Supernatural Power,* 143. See also Buenconsejo's summary who insists that it is in fact the *bantoy* who is giving instruction on social responsibility, through the *baylan,* during the ritual, Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 91.
[287] Ibid, 91-93.
[288] Missionary D, "Prayer Partner Letter," (September 1978)

Despite recognising this distinction, however, OMF missionaries still tended to tag all spirit beings as "demonic." "He doesn't really accept the fact that the *bantoy* are from Satan" writes missionary G after listening to the *baylan* expound favourably about his *bantoy* (see above, n. 236).

In concluding this section, time must be given to considering what measures are commonly taken to countervail the injurious power of sorcerer and *aswang*. There is a record of traditional methods used among rural communities as a form of defence against the intrigues of *aswang* and sorcerer. Ramos has written of the *aswang's* supposed fear of knives and sharpened bamboo staves, and that the placing of salt, spices and the skins of some species of sea life in strategic places is also an effective means of protection.[289] However, inexplicably absent from Ramos' article is any reference to amulets as a form of defence against *aswang*. Amulets, generally referred to as *anting anting* in Tagalog, Cebuano and Manobo-speaking regions, are probably the most common form of protection from the threat of *aswang* and sorcerer alike. Much has been written on the important role of *anting anting* in Filipino uprisings against colonial rule in the past.[290] Leaders of these uprisings were able to recruit the loyalty of a large section of the populace if they could successfully present themselves as men endowed with supernatural power; possessing a powerful *anting anting* was essential for accruing such power and possessing one provided protection from bullets and swords. However *anting anting* have become ubiquitous objects of indigenous Philippine religiosity and are used for more than just protection against bullets: "They are also held to be efficient against the spells of spirits, witches, or sorcerers, to cure a wide range of

[289] Ramos, *The Aswang Syncrasy,* 240-42.
[290] Important studies on this subject are: Filomena V. Jr Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits: The History of Power and Sugar Planter Hegemony on a Visayan Island* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998). Evelyn Tan Cullamar, *Babaylanism in Negros: 1896-1907* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1986). Alfred W. McCoy, "Baylan: Animist Religion and Philippine Peasant Ideology," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 10, no. 3 (1982). See also Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 22-27.

illnesses, protect crops and animals, or make their owners invisible or able to fly or to change appearance at will."[291]

Sacred objects of the Catholic Church such as crucifixes, crosses, scapularies and holy water have become popular *anting anting* that are kept in a home or carried on one's person as a way of fending off evil powers. Latin prayers, known as o*rasyun*, have also long been used as a form of supernatural power that affords protection. Often collated in small books called *libritos, orasyun* would be uttered by someone as a means of activating the prayer's protective power.[292] The use of Latin words in this context almost certainly has its origins in the Spanish Catholic tradition and McCoy makes reference to the 1893 work by an Augustinian religious called Zuñiga who had studied the use of amulets in Pangasinan, Luzon. The amulets were highly prized by their owners and consisted of "Latin and Latin-sounding Filipino words written on slips of paper and always carried on their owner's person."[293]

In his chapter on "Amulets and Talismans", McAndrew includes a transcript of his interview with a Visayan sorcerer living in Davao del Norte, Mindanao, who showed McAndrew a small bottle of oil containing small rolled-up pieces of paper upon which were scribbled *orasyun* and drawings accompanied by Latin letters.[294] This kind of *anting anting* was frequently encountered by this author during his time living among the Manobo. This use of *orasyun* graphically illustrates how the practice of Latin prayers, introduced by the Spanish as a devotional practice, was transformed by local religionists and made to function as an object of power. The fact that the words were unintelligible was irrelevant and may very well have

[291] Axel Borchgrevink, "Ideas of Power in the Philippines: Amulets and Sacrifice," *Cultural Dynamics* 15, no. 1 (2003): 51.
[292] McCoy, *Baylan,* 156. See also the references to the use of *orasyun* by revitalization movements that fought against the Americans on the island of Negros, in Cullamar, *Babaylanism*, 71.
[293] Joaquin Martinez De Zuñiga, *Status of the Philippines in 1800* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1973), 142-50. Quoted in McCoy, *Baylan,* 156.
[294] McAndrew, *People of Power,* 52.

increased their potency in the minds of local Filipinos; a state of affairs that has survived to this day.[295]

This summary of the relationship between spirit and human has crucial significance for chapter six when we examine how Manobo Christians interpret Scripture and, in particular, the character of God and core elements of an appropriate Christian lifestyle that they read from the biblical text. The data gathered for this thesis will suggest that the ethic at the nexus of the relationship between Manobo and *diwata,* outlined above, maintains substantial influence in the Manobo interpretive process. The importance of this finding is that it runs contrary to missionaries' normative attitudes towards indigenous cosmologies. The tendency to equate *diwata* with the Christian concept of "demons" means missionaries have usually never considered the possibility that the indigenous spirit domain might possibly shape biblical interpretation. The place occupied by *anting anting* within Manobo worldview also has significance for chapter five, when we investigate Manobo notions of biblical authority. The power of *anting anting* to protect from malign forces, and the peculiar use of text as being of a piece with the paraphernalia of *anting anting,* is another element from the vast and intricate world of Manobo cosmology that exerts influence upon Manobo engagement with the Bible.

Manobo Customary Law

There is no body of written text that constitutes Manobo law, but rather an unwritten corpus of wisdom that prescribes what is acceptable behaviour for any Manobo.[296] The word used to denote this indigenous, unwritten body of customary

[295] Danilyn Rutherford, "The Bible Meets the Idol: Writing and Conversion in Biak, Irian Jaya, Indonesia," in *The Anthropology of Christianity*, ed. Fenella Cannell (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 259. Rutherford, writing about the encounter between the Biak people of Irian Jaya and the Bible says, "The very strangeness of the evangelists' words was what gave them their potency and appeal."

[296] In considering Manobo law we must remember that in the study of some cultures, customary law is no longer considered as an unchanged corpus of wisdom, passed down through generations. In an influential book, published in 1985, Martin Chanock challenged the orthodox opinions on customary

authority among the Manobo is "*batasan,"* a word which as Manuel points out is probably the closest that can be offered because the term is also used to refer to an individual's "habit" or "character."[297] For example, a comment could be made to the effect that, "He always does that, it is his *batasan," or "*That woman shows good character (*batasan*)." To have the one word refer to both customary law and character is probably quite apposite, however, signifying that the purpose of the customary law is to produce good character in people that is displayed in good behaviour.[298]

The basic political unit within Manobo society is the kinship group.[299] These kinship groups in the past lived together in small hillside clearings, under the care of a single *datu.* The kinship group was a bilateral one with "strong ties of reciprocity and obligation between the kindred of the groom and the kindred of the bride."[300] If the kinship group was to remain stable then all members had to live in accordance with Manobo *batasan.* It is not insignificant that in the writings of Manobo authors, there are large sections on "Social Values" outlining the importance of respect for all people, but especially between spouses, towards members of the wider family such as in-laws, and particularly the elderly.[301] Behaviour commensurate with these values was to be maintained, not only towards one's kin but towards those within

law in Malawi and Zambia as it was presented in the colonial era. Chanock claims that the customary law, which was put to use in the courts of these countries when they moved to indirect rule, was not inherited wisdom, but a system largely invented in this period to defend the interests of black and/or white elites in the face of new challenges to the availability of rural labour. Cf. Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). No equivalent study has been done on the evolution of customary law among Mindanao's *Lumads*, though perhaps the failure of colonial governments to exercise substantial levels of control over interior Mindanao makes it a moot issue for the Manobo and other *Lumads*.

[297] Manuel, *Manuvú Social Organization*, 277. Garvan, *The Manóbos,* 341-342.

[298] In a similar vein, the word for customary law among the Tiruray of western Mindanao is "*adat,"* which also means "respect." As Schlegel puts it, "The customs aim at respect. Respect is what customs are for." Stuart A. Schlegel, *Tiruray Justice: Traditional Tiruray Law and Morality* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1970), 28.

[299] Manuel calls it the "amorphous kinship group." Manuel, *Manuvú Social Organization*, 209.

[300] Elkins, *Introduction,* xv.

[301] Vander Molen, *A Voice from Mt Apo,* 49-61. Polenda, *A Voice From the Hills,* 49-76.

other kinship groups. It is the inter-kinship group relationships that are always considered to be particularly tricky. A person is likely to forgive a slight or ignore an insult from a close relative but with an outsider he is likely to respond in anger, perhaps even uncontrollable rage. Thus Schlegel can say of the Tiruray, "Thus it is a fact of life to Tiruray that the world of interfamilial social relations is one of danger, potential bloodshed, and continual risk and that amidst one's kinsmen there is mutual assistance and a context of relative safety."[302]

Manobo law operates on the presupposition that people have the capacity to be violent once their anger has been provoked. It is crucial, therefore, that people's behaviour corresponds to the principle of respect and so keeps the risk of violence to a minimum.[303] Respect, or life according to custom law, will ensure that everyone has a good "*goinawa."* The word *goinawa* in Manobo means "breath", but is also a metaphor for the centre of a person's feelings, the seat of their emotions.[304] Buenconsejo also reflects on the importance of the *goinawa* among the Agusan Manobo and interprets it as meaning "life in association with another person."[305] The state of an individual's *goinawa* is therefore dependent on a properly constituted relationship of respect with other Manobo, one that is reciprocal and sociable.[306] What Schlegel says of the Tiruray could also therefore be said of the Manobo. "They institutionalize the obligation of respect into specific customs and into a general variable standard."[307]

If, however, an individual does not experience appropriate respect from a fellow Manobo, that which corresponds to Manobo *batasan,* then their *goinawa* has been

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[302] Schlegel, *Tiruray Justice,* 30.
[303] Ibid, 30.
[304] For the Tiruray, the equivalent word is "*fedew",* which translates as gallbladder. Schlegel takes it as referring to "one's state of mind or rational feelings." Ibid, 32-33.
[305] Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts,* 65. The Agusan Manobo term is "*ginhawa"* which is also the Cebuano word for "breath."
[306] Ibid, 65.
[307] Schlegel, *Tiruray Justice,* 54.

hurt, has been deeply offended, and they have been diminished before their fellow Manobo.[308] It is when this happens that a Manobo can explode in anger and desire the death of the offender or some of his kin. It is this scenario that any Manobo community fears, for the outcome can be bloodshed and violence for a prolonged period. For this reason it is imperative that all offences against an individual are dealt with promptly and equitably. For this to happen the adjudication of the *datu* is essential.

The Datu

Reference has already been made to the political structure of Manobo society being the kinship group, an arrangement wherein each group lived separately from other similar groups and was generally supervised by a *datu* (see above, page 101). This arrangement is no longer the predominant political structure within Manobo society. The arrival of Visayan immigrants, the construction of roads and the move to a settled form of agriculture means the majority of Manobo now live in settled *barangays* alongside Visayan neighbours. As Cullen has observed, this has served to weaken the *datu* system and tribal law.[309] Nevertheless, because the reach of the Philippine National Police and the impact of state law still falls well short of the hinterlands of Mindanao, Manobo custom law and arbitration by *datus* are still critical factors in securing peace and order in these places.

A *datu* may inherit his position from his father but, as Biernatzki puts it, the position is "determined only partly by lineage."[310] An individual can become a *datu* if they earn the respect of their peers and this can be attained only if they can prove themselves endowed with the qualities necessary to be a good *datu.* Edgerton has

[308] Ibid, 49.
[309] Cullen, *Bukidnon Animism,* 3.
[310] William Eugene Biernatzki, "Bukidnon Datuship in the Upper Pulangi River Valley," in *Bukidnon Politics and Religion*, ed. Alfonso De Guzman and Esther M. Pacheco, IPC Papers (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 1973), 32.

distilled the qualities rather cogently when he writes that a good *datu* is skilled at mediating disputes, willing to welcome dependence and has an ability to cultivate harmony among people.[311] The settling of disputes is, according to Claver, the *datu's raison d'être*, for as we have already established, a failure to do this promptly and fairly may result in serious bloodshed.[312] Dependency is vital because resources are needed to resolve disputes and for other important occasions in the lives of the *datu's* kin. If the offender in a dispute is unable to find what he needs to make restitution for his wrongdoing, it falls to the *datu* to settle the affair using his own resources, whether pigs, *carabao*, horses, or by acquiring these necessary commodities through other benefactors with whom he/she has established a dependent relationship.[313] Also, if a member of the *datu's* kinship group needs an animal to expedite wedding preparations, then recourse is made to the *datu* to help meet the request.[314] Edgerton sums up the nature of the relationship like this:

> "They were asking, of course, not just for the objects themselves, but for the security of entering into a dependent but reciprocal patron-client relationship with a respected individual . . . With their request came their acknowledgment of his superiority; with his acceptance came his acknowledgment of their right to his largesse and protection."[315]

OMF missionaries' annotations on the role played by *datus* within Manobo society correspond with these observations. Missionary D writes: "The chief of a Manobo group is called a datu. He must have the ability to talk and argue. This is necessary to fulfil his function in judging disputes and law cases that are brought to him. Secondly he must be wealthy, or at least have access to wealth."[316]

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[311] Edgerton, *People of the Middle Ground*, 40.
[312] Claver, *Dinawat Ogil,* 88. See also Oona Paredes, *A Mountain of Difference*, 28-30.
[313] A *carabao* is a water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis carabanesis*)
[314] Edgerton, *People of the Middle Ground,* 39-40. Manuel highlights the irony of the *datu's* obligations thus; "He (the *datu*) does not only make decisions but also executes them, and when he does he often lends a helping hand in raising the damages which he himself has imposed and determined." Manuel, *Manuvú Social Organization*, 293.
[315] Ibid, 40.
[316] Missionary D, "Prayer Partner Letter," May 1977.

It is important that some attention is now given to what is involved in the resolution of disputes. The *sine qua non* for *datus* to be successful in settling disputes is that they are well versed in customary law.[317] Tact and skill are also required in the application of this body of traditional wisdom. Polenda insists that a man "can become a *datu* only if he is gifted with the ability to be a level-headed thinker who understands the [behaviour] of his fellows, both good and bad."[318] In addition, he is expected to be an accomplished public speaker and to be consistently impartial in making his judgements.[319]

Cases brought before a *datu* might be similar to criminal cases that are brought before the courts in any modern society, such as murder, theft or rape. The most common cases deal with married couples and involve adultery, elopement of married individuals, conflict within a marriage, accusations of lack of respect toward a spouse, conflict between two wives in a polygynous marriage, non-payment of a bride price. All of these can be brought for arbitration by a *datu* because the incident concerned has caused bad feeling on the part of someone. Unmarried couples who elope or who have sexual intercourse before marriage are also cases that arouse anger on the part of someone, usually parents. Cases that do not involve conflict or immoral behaviour within male/female relationships, but which can also cause bad feeling and require the mediation of a *datu* are insults, false accusation of wrong doing, the non-payment of debts and the refusal to fulfil one's obligations to help or give to someone in need.[320]

When cases are being handled the *datu* is expected to be concerned about the rights and feelings of everyone involved in the dispute. He/she will be representing

[317] Biernatzki, *Bukidnon Datuship,* 33.
[318] Polenda, *A Voice from the Hills,* 105.
[319] Biernatzki, *Bukidnon Datuship*, 33. Garvan, with poetic flourish describes the *datu* as a man with "fluency of speech . . . penetration and sagacity . . . personal prowess." Garvan, *The Manóbos,* 306.
[320] A number of cases representative of the types listed in this paragraph feature within the studies by Manuel and Schlegel. Cf., Manuel, *Manuvú Social Organization,* 277-294; Schlegel, *Tiruray Justice,* 119-151.

a particular person and their kindred within a dispute but she must not be seen to be contending for her own side. A good resolution is one where everyone leaves with good feelings. Edgerton perfectly summarises the *datu's* desired outcome:

> "Victory of one party over another was regarded as achieving nothing more than the prolonging of bad feelings that had made the ceremony necessary in the first place. The disequilibrium suffered by the plaintiff would be aggravated if he did not receive some compensation for his grievance; likewise, the defendant and his side would suffer bad feelings if they regarded the compensation asked of them to be unduly harsh."[321]

The skill and reputation of a *datu* is in his/her ability to achieve justice, "not in terms of outwitting or otherwise defeating other *kefudawan*."[322]

Manuel lists a number of sanctions within Manobo law which could be applied to those who had broken the law and aggravated the *goinawa* of their fellow Manobo. These included seizure of property, retaliation, self-help, restitution of damages, replacement and cursing. Manuel makes the point however, that on ninety-five percent of occasions "appeasement" of the offended party is the preferred means of resolution.[323] What the offended party is given by way of appeasement will depend on the seriousness of the offence against them and often, as already established above, the *datu* will need to provide the items and/or animals needed for the appeasement from his own resources. However, the size of the fine imposed on the offending party and then made as payment to the plaintiff is, as Schlegel puts it, "less significant than its symbolic quality."[324] The handing over of the payment says, in effect, that justice has been served and the case is now closed. A traditional end to the settlement is that both parties will engage in a ritual exchange of betel chew as a way of assuring all concerned that hostility has been averted.[325]

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[321] Edgerton, *People of the Middle Ground,* 43. See also Schlegel, *Tiruray Justice,* 61.
[322] Ibid, 123 in Schlegel. The word "*kefudawan*" is the Tiruray word for *datu*.
[323] Manuel, *Manuvú Social Organization,* 288.
[324] Schlegel, *Tiruray Justice,* 151.
[325] Manuel, *Manuvú Social Organization,* 295.

OMF worker, missionary B, recorded a murder case that was mediated by a *datu* local to where he lived. The case illustrates the negotiating skills of a good *datu* and how vital the *datu's* role is to maintaining peace and order. The datu representing the perpetrator of the crime made contact with the *datus* of the slain man's village and:

> ". . . after some days of discussion the case was settled with damages awarded to the slain man's family. In this case it was something like 3 water buffaloes, a pig, and a phonograph. L. (the perpetrator) didn't have the wherewithal to pay this himself, so the *datu* either gave himself or asked others to give that the case might be settled. When it was, everyone again felt safe to go back to their work and even L. could have walked into the next village without being hurt—the case was settled."[326]

A *datu* cannot compel obedience from anyone; the reality is "he has no police to back his orders."[327] As Schlegel puts it, "They (*datus*) cannot have anyone beaten, ostracized, imprisoned in any sense, or executed."[328] The efficacy of the *datu's* settlement of a dispute lies not in any coercive power but in what Schlegel describes as a "simple willingness of the people to accept his decisions as authoritative."[329] Behind this willingness lies the obvious desire on the part of Manobo communities to avoid the chaos of retaliatory violence. An additional reason, however, may be suggested. Schlegel believes that one reason for the Tiruray's willingness to submit to the decision of their "*kefudawan*" (*datus*) was the fear of involvement with the nearby Maguindanao power structure.[330] In other words, as long as their own system for maintaining peace and order was effective the Tiruray would be left to their own devices and not forced into submission to the law enforcement and judicial structures of the dominant lowland culture that bordered their territory. The same reasoning could be applied to the central

[326] Missionary B, Reflection on "Redemptive Analogies", June 1979.
[327] Ibid, 207-08
[328] Schlegel, *Tiruray Justice,* 64.
[329] Ibid, 170
[330] Ibid, 170.

Mindanao communities of Manobo with which this research is concerned. Willing cooperation with their own indigenous arrangements for ensuring peace and stability increases the Manobos' chances of preserving their independence from state control, a long-time cherished value among hill communities, already referred to (see above, page 80)

Conclusion

In this chapter we have focused primarily on a description of the Manobo cosmos, Manobo law and the role of *baylan* and *datu* within both of these complexes. The authors consulted have written on these subjects from within the fields of cultural and social anthropology and, by inserting notes from missionary archives, this author has sought to illustrate how the more scientific observations of the scholars are corroborated by missionaries' experiences on the ground. The offices of *baylan* and *datu,* though preoccupied with separate domains of responsibility, serve similar objectives, namely, that harmony and a balance of power is maintained between the players in each domain. The Manobo cosmos is alive with a multitude of *diwata,* powerful spirit beings with whom the Manobo are forced to interact; these *diwata* threaten the stability of people's lives by their very presence in the midst of human communities. The *baylan*, a man or woman knowledgeable in the ways of the *diwata* works to make certain that people are not overpowered by the *diwata* and that a relationship of respect, reciprocity and sociability prevails between Manobo and these invisible co-residents of their homeland. In like manner, the Manobo *datu* works exclusively within the world of humans where the volatility of human feelings threatens to overwhelm the lives of ordinary people with violence. The *datu,* a man or woman knowledgeable in the intricacies of customary law and human nature, works to avert the outbreak of bloodshed by adjudicating in disputes between families, thereby creating the conditions for a restoration of harmonious relationships.

Undergirding the performance of *baylan* and *datu* alike is the firm belief on the part of Manobo that relationships between people and spirits and between people and people hold out the potential for chaos and violence but that this can be obviated. Peaceful and mutually beneficial relationships can prevail if people demonstrate in their intercourse with the spirits and fellow Manobo the qualities of pity, communal sharing, generosity, hospitality and respect. Chapters five and six will argue that these qualities, integral to indigenous Manobo religiosity and interclan relationships, figure prominently in Manobo Christians' reading of the Christian Bible.

Having briefly examined the trajectory of the Bible's reception and spread in Mindanao and taken cognisance of important elements within Manobo cosmology and culture, we shall begin in the ensuing chapters to consider how these have shaped the Manobo engagement with a Bible that was conveyed to them by missionaries from within the evangelical stream of western Christianity. In the following chapter we shall firstly consider how Manobo Christians responded to having the Bible available in their mother tongue.

Chapter Four. Manobo Christians and the Vernacular Bible

We have already noted, in chapter one, that SIL translators were committed to translating the New Testament into the Manobo language and that OMF missionaries were, likewise, committed to evangelism and instructing new believers in the mother tongue with the aid of the vernacular Scriptures. It is important that we examine Manobo Christians' response to the Scriptures being available in their own language, not just because it was a strategic priority for SIL and OMF, but also because Bible translation has been integral to Protestant mission worldwide since the beginning of the nineteenth century. This chapter will therefore provide us the opportunity to analyse a local response to what is still a universal practice within Christian mission.

We shall begin the chapter with a brief outline of the importance of Bible translation to Christian mission in the past 200 years, paying particular attention to the "professionalization" of Bible translation in the latter half of the twentieth century, the values which have driven it forward and the principles which have shaped its practice. We shall then examine MABCAM Christians' response to the vernacular translations of the Bible available to them, using the data gathered in the interviews and sermon recordings. Following this we shall also consider, by way of comparison, how the vernacular Scriptures have fared among some of the church associations representing other *Lumad* groups in Mindanao. The chapter will then conclude with a discussion on the reasons why MABCAM members and pastors prefer not to read or teach from the Manobo Scriptures and what significance this has for the status of Bible translation as a strategic component within Christian mission.

Bible Translation and Mission

The modern missionary movement began with Bible translation at its heart. William Carey, widely (if inaccurately) considered as the founder of the movement, along with his colleagues Joshua Marshman and William Ward, gave primacy to Bible translation within their mission polity at Serampore in India. By 1826, according to Potts, the team at Serampore had finished six translations of the complete Bible and 24 partial translations.[331] As a component of Protestant mission, Bible translation gained additional momentum with the birth of the BFBS in 1804 and advances in printing technology.[332] The BFBS, and other subsequently formed national Bible societies, provided financial assistance to missionary translation projects and subsidised the printing costs of new translations, allowing them to be sold where they were needed at a price people could afford. In turn, the Protestant missionary movement ensured the success and longevity of the Bible societies; throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the Protestant missionary movement was constantly moving into regions of the world that remained unevangelised and in need of new translations of the Scriptures. Additional impetus was given to Bible translation in the twentieth century with the official incorporation in 1942 of the dual organisation WBT-SIL, under the leadership of William Cameron Townsend. Unlike the Bible societies, the SIL did not, and still do not, publish Bibles but maintained a single-minded commitment to translation in languages where there were no Scriptures available and where there was no church.[333] This specialist focus, sharpened by the linguistics training undertaken by their workers, has

[331] E. Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India 1793-1837: The History of Serampore and Its Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 81.
[332]Smalley, *Translation as Mission*, 27.
[333] Philip C. Stine, *Let the Words Be Written: The Lasting Influence of Eugene A. Nida* (Atlanta, Ga: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004). 23-24; Boone Aldridge, *All Things to All Men for the Gospel's Sake: The Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1934-1982* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming 2018).

allowed SIL to have an influence beyond the province of Bible translation and make a huge contribution to the field of linguistics.

In short, the past 200 years and more of Bible translation has helped make the Bible accessible in thousands of languages. The following was taken from the United Bible Societies' website:

> "Today, Scriptures are available in no less than 2,479 languages, with the complete Bible having been translated into at least 451 languages, and the New Testament into some 1,185. In addition, parts of the Bible (portions) have been made available in a further 843 languages."[334]

The stimulus for the activities of both the Bible society and missionary movements has its roots in the spiritual legacy of the eighteenth-century English Evangelical Revival.[335] The place of the Bible was central to the new spiritual life that emerged from this period and attendant upon this was the firm belief that people everywhere should be able to possess and read the Bible.[336] Carey and his fellow Baptists in India believed that the Bible would stand as a counter-authority to that of the Hindu and Islamic Scriptures, that it would draw respect from local people for the missionary, that it was essential for the ongoing instruction of new converts and that "in some cases, the volume of divine truth has become the substitute for a missionary, and has been found the means of conversion to a heathen…".[337]

The Bible societies had values similar to the team at Serampore and understood the importance of translated Scriptures for evangelism and for the spiritual growth and maturity of new Christian churches. In the Bibles they published, the Bible societies refrained from inserting any kind of interpretive apparatus into the margins of the text lest they be accused of doctrinal bias and perhaps limit the

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[334] http://www.ubs-translations.org/about_us/; accessed on February 22, 2016.
[335] Eric Fenn, "The Bible and the Missionary," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. S. L. Greenslade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 387-88
[336] Smalley, *Translation as Mission,* 27
[337] William Ward, *Farewell Letters to a Few Friends in Britain and America, on Returning to Bengal in 1821*, 2nd ed. (London1821), 175-77.

potential readership of their publications.[338] They preferred to leave interpretation and explanation of cultural and historical material to the churches or mission agencies' personnel using the respective translations.[339] The members of SIL were specifically concerned that the Bible would lead to a person's salvation and believed that the witness of the Scriptures alone could effect this. One SIL member, Wayne Dye, quotes from what became known as SIL's "Bible Translation Strategy," which declared, "Spiritually we believe that in those situations where there are no groups of believers… the witness of the translated Scriptures and of our lives will result in lives being changed and congregations being established".[340]

In expounding the seven characteristics of the strategy, Dye, commenting on number six – "reliance on the Scriptures" – states that SIL translators,

> ". . . take seriously the concept that every believer who has the Scriptures is in a position to be taught directly by the Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit. They need not rely on outside authorities to tell them how to run their lives because such would only introduce practices which do not fit the culture."[341]

Integral to this confidence in the power of the Scriptures to effect the Christianization of communities, was the conviction that the Scriptures must be accessible in the mother tongue of the listeners and/or readers. We have already made mention of this in chapter two with a quotation from SIL pioneer Eugene Nida's *Bible Translation,* stating his firm conviction that the Scriptures being accessible in the vernacular maximises people's understanding of the Bible and "has

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[338] " . . . . it was resolved that these Holy Writings should be issued by the Society "without note or comment," that thus they might go forth in unadorned majesty to speak for themselves." British & Foreign Bible Society, *The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society: From Its Institution in 1804, to the Close of Its Jubilee in 1854*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (London: British & Foreign Bible Society, 1859), 3. https://archive.org/stream/historyofbritish01brow#page/2/mode/2up/search/3; accessed March 02, 2016.

[339] Stine, *Let the words be written,* 23-24.

[340] Summer Institute of Linguistics, "The Task" in "Minutes of the 1973 Corporation Conference," (Huntingdon Beach: SIL, 1973), quoted in Thurlow Wayne Dye, "The Bible Translation Strategy: An Analysis of Its Impact (PhD Diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1982), 22.

[341] Ibid, 25.

a dynamic appeal to their inner thought life" (chapter two, page 70). For Nida, a natural corollary to this principle was that effective evangelism and the growth of an indigenous church were also more likely to follow a mission strategy that prioritised the use of mother-tongue Scriptures. [342] This high estimation of the importance of the vernacular for evangelisation has led to it becoming an essential criterion in some circles for examining church history, understanding church growth and in developing mission polity.[343]

Over and above these well-established reasons for privileging the vernacular Scriptures is the theological case for doing so, as famously advocated by Professor Lamin Sanneh of Yale Divinity School in his book, *Translating the Message.* Sanneh argues that Christianity has become a universal faith because it is essentially a translatable religion and that the principle of translation acted as a corrective to the notion that some cultures were self-evidently superior to others. Being translatable allows Christianity to be affirming toward receptor cultures and could "enter into each cultural idiom fully enough to commence a challenging and enduring engagement."[344] Sanneh also reasons that the principle of translation works against uniformity and allows the church to become a pluralist community. Christianity is not averse to assimilation and syncretism. It is versatile, adaptable and tolerant of the cultures it visits. All of this exemplifies its translatability.[345]

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[342] "The Bible in the language of the people has proved to be the primary and fundamental prerequisite for an indigenous church . . . no really successful indigenous work has ever been accomplished without some of the Bible in the local language." Nida, *Bible Translating,* 35.
[343] For an example of the place of the vernacular in the growth of Africa Independent Churches, cf. David B. Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968). For an example of the same as a criterion for reflecting on church history, cf. Calvin E. Shenk, "The Demise of the Church in North Africa and Nubia and Its Survival in Egypt and Ethiopia: A Question of Contextualization?," *Missiology: An International Review* XXI, no. 2 (1993). For an indication of the importance of the Scottish Gaelic Bible in establishing Protestant Christianity in the Scottish Highlands, cf. Donald E. Meek, *The Scottish Highlands: The Churches and Gaelic Culture* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996).
[344] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact of Culture*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2008), 73.
[345] Ibid, 79.

In assessing the specific value of Bible translation, Sanneh moves beyond its obvious benefits for reader comprehension and church expansion and, with specific reference to Africa, contends that mother-tongue Scriptures ignited new indigenous aspirations for African Christians, increased their sense of self-worth and overturned missionary assumptions about the normative superiority of the missionaries' European culture.[346]

In concluding this section a word also needs to be said about changes in translation theory and procedures, developed by Eugene Nida after he left SIL and joined the ABS in 1943. Up until Nida began to challenge established practice, Bible society examiners demanded that manuscripts "conformed closely either to the form of the biblical source languages of Greek and Hebrew or to the form of a modern European language such as English, French or German."[347] This made some translations difficult to read and in effect limited access to those "who had received some biblical or theological training."[348] This criticism was levelled at the translations supervised by Carey and his team at Serampore. J. C. Marshman, writing in 1859, said of the first printed Bengali New Testament that, "in many cases, it presented a simple translation of the English words arranged in the English order or collocation."[349]

Nida viewed Bible translation as a form of communication and helped translators to understand that forms of speech and writing in any language were shaped by culture and that the forms in a source text were likely to be very different from those in a receptor culture. For Nida, this meant that a translation excessively faithful to the form of the biblical text was more likely to distort meaning, rather

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[346] Ibid, 193.
[347] Stine, *Let the Words be Written,* 26.
[348] Ibid, 26.
[349] John Clark Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward. Embracing the History of the Serampore Mission*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (London: Longman, 1859). 180, quoted in Potts, *British Baptist,* 84.

than provide evidence of faithfulness.[350] Nida's response was to introduce the concept of "dynamic equivalence" to translators, which encouraged them to aim for a "dynamic" rather than "formal" relationship between the source message and receptor language that would correspond to the relationship between the original receptor and the source message. In his 1964 publication, *Toward a Science of Translating,* he described a dynamic equivalence translation as one which "aims at complete naturalness of expression and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behaviour relevant within the context of his own culture".[351]

It is hard to overestimate the influence that the principles of dynamic equivalence have had on the field of Bible translation. Stine makes the point that since the 1970s most of the hundreds of Bible translations worldwide have utilised the dynamic equivalence method.[352] The translations made available to MABCAM members were completed by SIL missionaries whose translation practice was also shaped by these methods. We shall return to examine the significance of this later in the chapter.

MABCAM Members and the Vernacular Scriptures

When OMF missionaries began serving in central Mindanao in the mid-1970s, their objective was to evangelise and plant churches among the Ata, Tala-ingod, Tigwa and Matigsalug Manobo (chapter two, page 72). The invitation to begin work in central Mindanao was made to OMF by SIL who at that time, were supervising translations of the New Testament into Ata, Tigwa and Matigsalug.[353] MABCAM currently has churches within these four language groups and also among the

[350] Stine, *Let the Words be Written,* 37-38.
[351] Eugene Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964), 159.
[352] Philip C. Stine, "Revisiting the Classics: Dynamic Equivalence Reconsidered," *The Translator* 10, no. 1 (2004), 129.
[353] No translation of the New Testament into the Tala-ingod language was ever undertaken, presumably because, as a language, it is linguistically speaking very close to Ata.

Pulanguihon Manobo, the Dibabawon people and the Umayamnon people; churches among the latter three people groups were established within the past fifteen years. Today there are completed New Testaments in Ata (printed in 2000), Dibabawon (printed in 1977), Matigsalug (printed in 2011) and Scripture portions available in the Tigwa Manobo and Umayamnon languages.

When examining the usage of the vernacular Scriptures by MABCAM members it is important to understand that for a long time a whole Bible has been available in the Cebuano language, the *lingua franca* for most of Mindanao's people.[354] The Cebuano language's position as the trade language for most of Mindanao's provinces is a consequence of immigration, especially in the post-World War II period (chapter two, page 61ff). Between 1948 and 1960 more than one million immigrants arrived in Mindanao from the Visayas; more than 60% of these were from the Central Visayas, whose language is Cebuano.[355]

The two primary sources of data from MABCAM members were gathered during the fieldwork for this thesis and were presented in chapter one: namely, the interviews recorded with members, and the sermons and adult Sunday school messages recorded on Sunday mornings. A third primary source was a young people's Bible study. In order to determine the predilection of MABCAM members the author asked each interviewee which translation they preferred to use for personal Bible reading and why they preferred it. Concerning the sermons, the Bible translation each preacher preferred to read from was recorded, as was the language they used as the medium of communication with their congregations.

Data from Interviews

If we firstly consider those members interviewed who could read, 79% preferred to read the Bible in Cebuano only, the *lingua franca*. If we combine this with those

[354] The most popular Cebuano Bible has been the *Maayong Balita Biblia* (Good News Bible).
[355] Wernstedt and Simkins, *Migrations*, 96.

who use Cebuano and English translations in their personal reading, then 83% of those interviewed preferred to read an alternative to the Manobo Scriptures. (Appendix B, Table 3). There is some variation in the statistics relating to age, gender, levels of formal education and location. Among readers thirty-five years of age and under, 84% (21/25) preferred the Cebuano Bible; this was reduced slightly to 77% (17/22) for readers over the age of thirty-five. Of the four people who preferred to read Manobo, three out of four were over the age of thirty-five (Appendix B, Table 4). If we consider those with some level of formal education, 82% (33/42) preferred to read the Cebuano Bible over against five out of seven of those who could read but had never had any formal schooling experience (Appendix B, Table 5).[356] By looking at the variable of gender the data showed that 85% (23/27) of women readers favoured the Cebuano Scriptures over 75% (15/20) of men (Appendix B, Table 6). These figures indicate that a slightly greater proportion of younger readers preferred the Cebuano Bible and that younger people were unlikely to read only the Cebuano Bible. Having some level of formal education also increased the chances of someone preferring the Cebuano Bible, as did being female.

The variables of age, gender and levels of formal education do not reveal very much of value. The variable of location, however, is the one variable which provides some material of interest for the overall findings. All of those who preferred to read the Manobo Bible exclusively, lived in zone three and this was the only zone with more members who preferred to read the Bible in Manobo than in Cebuano.[357] While only three of the nine reading members in zone three chose the Cebuano Bible alone over the Manobo for personal reading, four of the nine opted for the Manobo translation alone. The remaining two readers from zone three liked to read both

[356] Formal education refers to anyone who has completed at least one year of elementary school through to college graduate.
[357] For information on zones within MABCAM, see pages 19-20.

Cebuano and Manobo. This contrasts sharply with reading members from the other zones surveyed. In zones four and six, 100% of reading members interviewed preferred to read the Cebuano Bible and the figure was 83% (13/17) for members from zone 1 (Appendix B, Table 7).

When interviewees were asked why they preferred the Cebuano translation for personal study there were two main reasons expressed. Difficulty with reading the Manobo translation accounted for 45% (17/38) of responses. Some examples of this category of response are as follows:

> "I have a Manobo Bible but the Manobo is longer. It takes a longer time to say something than the *bisaya*.[358] However if the *bisaya* is not clear I will take out the Manobo Bible and read it and sometimes vice versa." (Interview 12)
>
> "I have a Manobo Bible but it is hard to read. It goes the long way round." (Interview 15)
>
> Qu. "Why do you think Manobo Christians do not often read a Manobo Bible?"
>
> Ans. "They do not often read it because it is hard for them to read. There are different spellings which they struggle to read.[359] There are many different Manobo Bibles such as Matigsalug; if they read it the 'e' is pronounced as 'o'. For them the Visayan Bible is much easier, because you can just read directly." (Interview 58)
>
> "I prefer the Visayan. I can get lost reading the Manobo." (Interview 62)
>
> Qu. "Have you read a Manobo Bible?"
>
> Ans. "Yes sometimes I read one."
>
> Qu. "Which do you prefer to read? Manobo or Visayan?"
>
> Ans. "Visayan. I find the Matigsalug difficult." (Interview 63)

[358] *Lumads* and Cebuano-speakers tend to call the Cebuano language *bisaya* or *binisaya*. The word refers to the Visayan region of the central Philippines where Cebuano is one of a number of Visayan languages and from where large numbers of people emigrated to settle in Mindanao.

[359] The mention of "spellings" refers to the differences in orthography between Manobo translations. The sound signified by the letter "o" in almost all of the translations referred to in this research is signified by an "e" in the Matigsalug translation.

The second most common response from interviewees was that some had never had the opportunity to read or to own a Manobo translation, suggesting that, from their perspective, there has not been adequate promotion or distribution of these Bibles. This accounted for 29% (11/38) of interviewees. A sampling of these responses is as follows:

> "The Ata Manobo Bible has never been given out in our village. We have never had the chance to own one." (Interview 7)
>
> "I could read a Manobo Bible if I had one but no one has given us any Manobo Bibles. I have only been living here five years." (Interview 8)
>
> "I don't think the Manobo translation of the New Testament has made its way to our village yet. It would be good to have a Manobo Bible as almost all our members are Manobo." (Interview 18)
>
> "I have not read one because no Manobo Bible has arrived here." (Interview 66)

The remaining 26% (10/38) responded that they were used to the Cebuano and preferred it for no other reasons than that.

Data from Sermons and Sunday School Lessons

A Sunday morning in Manobo churches is usually divided between the adult Sunday school and a morning worship service. The Sunday school begins first and usually lasts from forty minutes to one hour. A teacher gives instruction on a topic and afterwards, those attending have opportunity to ask questions and/or make additional comments to what has already been taught. The morning service, which follows the Sunday school, provides time for singing, the sharing of prayer requests, announcements, the collection of weekly tithes and a sermon, usually delivered by the church pastor or another of the congregation's leaders. For the purposes of this thesis the author recorded sixteen sermons and seven Sunday school lessons.

There are several configurations of language used by MABCAM preachers (Figure 4). The most popular is to read the Bible in Cebuano and preach using Manobo with

61% (14/23) opting for this. The next most popular configuration is to read in Cebuano and preach in Cebuano which is preferred by 26% (6/23). If we combine the numbers of all those who preferred to read from the Cebuano Bible as they prepared to preach, then 91% (21/23) of those who teach preferred to use the text of the Cebuano Bible. With regard to the medium of instruction, a strong majority of 70% (16/23) still preferred to teach exclusively in their mother tongue.

	Numbers	Percentage
Bible Reading in Cebuano & Preaching in Cebuano & Manobo	1	4%
Bible Reading in Cebuano & Preaching in Cebuano	6	26%
Bible Reading in Cebuano & Preaching in Manobo	14	61%
Bible Reading in Manobo & Cebuano & Preaching in Manobo	1	4%
Bible Reading in Manobo & Preaching in Manobo	1	4%

Figure 4 Language Use by preachers and adult Sunday school teachers

Data revealed that training or the absence of training does not influence the translation used in teaching. All of those who had had no training still preferred to read from the Cebuano though they were more likely to preach using Manobo. The variable of location, however, does affect the choice of translation and medium. All of those who preach in Cebuano using the Cebuano Bible were from zone one and no one from zone three or zone six ever preached using Cebuano language as medium (Table 9. Appendix B).

Data from Young Peoples' Bible Study

The author was able to attend this event for two Friday evenings in November 2014. The venue was the village of Bunawan in zone one. There were fifteen to seventeen teenagers present each evening, with an even mix of male and female who gathered with their young pastor. Though the pastor was present on both evenings he took no active part in the proceedings of the evening. The meeting began on both occasions with one of the young people present opening in prayer, reading a passage from the Bible and then giving a brief explanation. The reading desk was then left open for anyone who wanted to come forward and make additional comments on the meaning of the passage and its life application. On the first evening there were three in total who commented on the passage; four on the second evening. All of these used the Cebuano Bible and spoke using the Cebuano language

Summary

In summarising how the data informs our understanding of the place of mother-tongue translations among MABCAM members, it is clear that the majority of these Manobo Christians prefer to utilise the Bible in the *lingua franca*, both for private study and for corporate teaching. The interview data suggests that being female, younger and with a level of formal education increases the likelihood of a MABCAM member opting for the Cebuano over against the Manobo translation. This is

corroborated by the author's attendance at the young people's Bible study where Cebuano was the only language used for both Bible reading and commentary. The variable of location will also be significant for our analysis. We have already noted that the majority of interviewees from zone three preferred the Manobo Bible for private study and that no preacher in zone three ever taught using the Cebuano language. We shall return to these points in our analysis later in the chapter.

Beyond MABCAM: Vernacular Scripture Usage Elsewhere on Mindanao.

This section scrutinises the place of mother-tongue Scriptures among other indigenous people groups on Mindanao, allowing us to compare the data recovered from MABCAM churches with the wider context of the island. This should enable us to determine if the current standing of the vernacular Scriptures within MABCAM is unique within Mindanao or if it is perhaps indicative of a wider phenomenon.

The author elected to investigate the status of vernacular Bible use among the following people groups on Mindanao. 1. The Sarangani Blaan people of southern Mindanao.[360] 2. The Dulangan Manobo of western Mindanao.[361] 3. The Obo Manobo of central Mindanao.[362] 4. The Matigsalug Manobo of central Mindanao.[363] 5. The Agusan Manobo of northern Mindanao.[364] The author travelled to the

[360] Sarangani Blaan; pop. 90,800; resident in the provinces of Sarangani, South Cotabato, Davao del Sur and General Santos City; Cf. M. Paul Lewis, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig, eds., *Ethnologue: Languages of Philippines*, 19th ed., Ethnologue (Dallas: SIL International, 2016), 20.
[361] Dulangan Manobo; pop. 30,000; resident in the provinces of Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato; Ibid, 41.
[362] Obo Manobo; pop. 60,000; resident in the provinces of Davao del Sur and North Cotabato; Ibid, 43.
[363] Matigsalug Manobo; pop. 50,000; resident in the provinces of Bukidnon, North Cotabato and Davao del Sur; Ibid, 42.
[364] Agusan Manobo; pop. 60,000; resident in the provinces of Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte and Sarangani del Sur; Ibid, 40-41.

regions of Mindanao where each of these people groups reside and spent time interviewing church leaders and/or Bible translators.[365]

Figure 5 Map indicating location of church groups out-with MABCAM

Sarangani Blaan

The C&MA, whose mission to Mindanao we have already assessed in chapter two, was the most successful Protestant mission among the Blaan people in the period before World War II and today more Blaan Protestants belong to the CAMACOP congregations than to any other Protestant church grouping (chapter two, page 54). The author's investigation into vernacular Bible usage among the Blaan consisted in an interview with three CAMACOP church leaders who serve within the South

[365] An exception to this was the Dulangan Manobo Church leaders whom the author was able to interview at the SIL premises in Davao City.

Mindanao Cultural Communities (SMCC) District of CAMACOP.[366] These three leaders confirmed what we have already documented in chapter two, namely that the American missionaries of the early twentieth century preached in English using interpreters and an English Bible. The earliest Filipino evangelists who had been trained at the Ebenezer seminary in Zamboanga also needed interpreters because they were more comfortable preaching in English than in any Philippine language. Blaan-speaking pastors and evangelists eventually became commonplace when Blaan Christians began enrolling for training at Ebenezer.

The three leaders reported that 60-70% of the churches within the SMCC district are Blaan-speaking congregations. A Sarangani Blaan New Testament was published in 1980 and a second edition with Old Testament portions was published in 1998. The leaders affirmed that 35 years ago, when the New Testament was first published, Blaan was the dominant language of use among Blaan Christians and within their churches. Since then, however, the scene has changed and they admitted that many Blaan, CAMACOP members will have Blaan, Cebuano and English translations of the Bible in their homes and that it is uncertain what translation they prefer. They also believe that the majority of pastors are now using the Cebuano Bible for preaching and teaching. Only one of these three leaders admitted to using the Blaan Bible for their own personal study or sermon preparation. The remaining two leaders declared they use the English Bible for these tasks and the Blaan and/or Cebuano Bibles as supplements to the process.

When asked about the possibility of further erosion of the place of the mother tongue in Blaan churches the three leaders were nevertheless positive about the future of the language. They made reference to good Blaan songwriters within the Blaan congregations and their preparations for translating the Old Testament into

[366] One of these was ministry supervisor of this district, another was a zone coordinator within the district and the third was Principal of the Alliance Pastor's Bible School (APBS), a training facility for CAMACOP members in full-time employment who wish to be trained for the pastorate.

Blaan. They did not believe that Blaan churches would eventually become 100% Cebuano-speaking saying, "The mixture of language uses will be maintained within the churches due to the education process they have been through. The teaching will be a mix of different languages inside the churches . . . there is still a great deal of pride in our language".[367]

Obo Manobo

Protestant mission among the Obo Manobo began in the 1930s when C&MA missionaries began evangelising around the town of Kidapawan, in what was then Cotabato province (chapter two, page 54).[368] Today, most of the congregations where the majority of members are Obo Manobo, are CAMACOP churches.

In order to gain some understanding of Bible usage among the Obo Manobo the author was granted an interview with members of the organisation, Obo Manobo Active Language Resource and Community Development Incorporated (OMALRACDI).[369] This included two Manobo-speaking pastors and a member of the Obo translation team; the Obo Manobo New Testament was dedicated in 2011. One of the pastors, who also works as a presenter for the Obo Christian radio programme, was extremely positive about the influence of the Obo New Testament. He believes the vernacular Obo New Testament has "enabled the word of God to spread out," especially through the assistance of the radio programme.[370] The radio programme, by strictly adhering to the Obo language as the medium, facilitates Bible teaching over the airwaves into remote areas. This same pastor estimates that 70-80% of churches where the majority of members are Manobo use the vernacular Bible in worship services. He stressed that if Cebuano-speaking

[367] "Personal Interview of SMCC leaders with the author", March 17, 2015, 4.
[368] Mendoza, *The Philippine Christian Alliance,* 76-79.
[369] OMALRACDI is an NGO established to enable community development of Obo Manobo communities through literacy, development and the translation of reading materials into the vernacular. Cf. https://www.obomanobo.com .
[370] "Interview of OMALRACDI leaders with the author", April 01, 2015, 1.

worshippers are present, the pastors will still use the Obo Manobo Bible but translate difficult passages into Cebuano for the visitors. The second pastor was less sanguine about the use of the Obo New Testament and explained that, because there were multiple ethnicities within the congregation in which he serves, they tend to use the Cebuano Bible and then compensate Manobo members by having a Manobo Sunday once a month, on which day the only language used during the entire service is Manobo. He also admitted to using the Cebuano Bible for personal study and sermon preparation.

The Bible translator this author interviewed, who is a member of SIL and has been involved in the Obo Manobo translation from its beginning in 1989, doubted the pastor's estimate that 70-80% of majority Obo-speaking churches were exclusively using the Obo New Testament. She listed a number of Manobo villages where she knows there are no Obo New Testaments available because there has not been any distribution. She also expressed doubts that many of the churches local to the OMALRACDI headquarters were exclusively using the Obo Manobo language in church services:

> "I think that all the way down this highway, the churches maybe read a portion from the Obo Manobo Bible, but I think that most of the service is probably a mixture, mainly Visayan (Cebuano), because we have lots of churches that are a mix of languages."[371]

Matigsalug Manobo

Protestant mission began among the Matigsalug Manobo in the early 1970s by Filipino Christians unrelated to any denomination or mission. By the end of the 1970s, the General Baptist Mission from the United States had become involved with evangelising the Matigsalug and helping provide training for church leaders. Today they are the largest denomination among the Matigsalug, responsible for more than 100 congregations and the maintenance of the Matigsalug Bible Institute

[371] Ibid, 4.

(MBI). The latter provides pastoral training for General Baptist churches within the Matigsalug area.

In examining the place of vernacular Scriptures among the Matigsalug Manobo of central Mindanao I was granted an interview with two members, both Manobo, of the United Matigsalug Language Christian Association (UMLCA)[372] and corresponded by email with an SIL translator. The latter has been intimately involved with the Matigsalug New Testament translation project and is currently consultant to UMLCA as they continue translation of the Old Testament.

From the beginning, evangelism and instruction of believers and new leaders was done using a Cebuano translation of the Bible and, according to the UMLCA personnel, that is still the most popular Bible within the General Baptist congregations. The Matigsalug New Testament, published in 2011, is used in congregations where the village population is solidly Matigsalug with no Visayan settlers. However even in villages like these, the pastor may still prefer to use the Cebuano Bible. The staff of UMLCA, while having to give time to Old Testament translation duties, are also having to work hard at distribution and promotion of the New Testament. The comment by the UMLCA staff that, "We still have lots of stock," indicates there is still a lot of work to do in getting the vernacular translation of the New Testament into the hands of Matigsalug Christians and in convincing them of the value of reading this in preference to the *lingua franca*.[373]

Both UMLCA interviewees insisted that, according to their own research, Matigsalug believers understand the message of Scripture much more clearly if they can read or listen to the Bible being read in their mother tongue. For this reason they have committed to training and involving ordinary members in "community-checking" of

[372] UMLCA is an NGO dedicated to promoting literacy and the use of the mother tongue Scriptures among the Matigsalug.
[373] "Interview of UMLCA leaders with the author", March 31, 2015, 1.

translation work and to producing other forms of media that will meet the needs of people in remote areas.[374] They have also initiated programmes which train people to read competently in their own language, such as reading tests, verse memorisation and singing contests. They believe that these activities can encourage younger Matigsalug to read the Matigsalug Bible and become familiar with it.[375]

Agusan Manobo

Protestant mission among the Agusan Manobo began in the 1950s with the arrival of Free Methodist missionaries from the United States (chapter two, page 66). The Free Methodists are the largest Protestant denomination among the Agusan Manobo and their Light and Life Bible College in Butuan is conveniently located as a place for pastoral training. The New Testament in Agusan Manobo was completed by an SIL translation team and published in 2000.

In assessing Scripture use among the Agusan Manobo the author did not interview any Agusan Manobo church leaders, choosing instead to use the research findings of Rose Marie P. Campos and to supplement this with a personal interview.[376] Campos' research is a study of language attitudes among Agusan Manobo speakers and her methodology involved examining language use within four major domains: the home; speaking to friends; the social/public domain (i.e. when speaking with government officials, school teachers, city people or at *barangay* meetings); and the religious domain. She did this by conducting interviews with Agusan Manobo people

[374] Ibid, 3.
[375] Ibid, 2.
[376] Rose Marie P. Campos, "Language Attitudes among Agusan Manobo Speakers in the Philippines" (Ma Thesis; Chiang Mai, Thailand: Payap University, 2014). Campos is a member of the Translators Association of the Philippines (TAP), and is assigned as a Scripture Engagement worker among the Agusan Manobo. Scripture Engagement is a programme within SIL that helps "language communities consider and plan for access to Scripture in the languages and media that serve them best." https://www.sil.org/translation/scripture-engagement; accessed September 18, 2017,

within remote and non-remote *barangays*.[377] The conclusions of Campos' research were that overall, Manobo was the dominant language within the home and for communicating with friends. However, if the usage was evaluated by location, then in the less remote *barangays* Cebuano actually replaced Manobo in this domain.[378] In addition, though Manobo was preferred for communication with family members, there was a higher use of Cebuano when talking to the younger generations, indicating a "disruption in language transmission across generations."[379] Campos' findings for language use within the social/public domain were that Cebuano is the obvious preferred language for Manobo if they have to communicate with non-Manobo speakers.[380]

The results of Campos' research for the religious domain are particularly germane to this thesis because fifty-two of the seventy-two interviewees (72%) were Protestant Christians. In all the churches represented by the respondents, Cebuano was the preferred language for every activity. For social gatherings at church 80% of those interviewed said Cebuano was used, while 12% declared it was Manobo.[381] In relation to singing at church 63% said Cebuano songs alone were sung, while not a single respondent said that Manobo songs were ever sung exclusively.[382] For corporate prayer, 90% said Cebuano alone was used and none that Manobo alone was used.[383] For church announcements 76% said Cebuano alone was used while 10% said they were made using only Manobo.[384] For personal prayer 67% said they

[377] Campos' criteria for a non-remote barangay was the presence of secondary schools, markets, a town hall and that the barangay was easily accessed by outsiders. Remote barangays were classified as villages with no schools, no markets and only accessible by motorcycle or boat; Ibid, 24-25.
[378] Campos, *Languge Attitudes,* 32-43.
[379] Ibid, 59.
[380] Ibid, 45-50
[381] Ibid, 52
[382] Ibid, 53. It needs to be said that 8% of respondents reported that a mixture of Cebuano and Manobo songs were sung and 8% also admitted that they used a mixture of Manobo, Cebuano, Tagalog and English songs.
[383] Ibid, 54. 8% of respondents said that a mixture of Cebuano and Manobo was used.
[384] Ibid, 55. 12% admitted that a mixture of Manobo and Cebuano was used in making announcements.

prayed using Cebuano while 29% said they did so using Manobo.[385] With respect to Bible use, 88% of respondents said the Bible used in their church was Cebuano.[386] This latter statistic is significant, bearing in mind that Agusan Manobo have access to an Agusan Manobo New Testament, copies of which, according to Campos, were given to churches, church leaders and others who wanted one.[387]

In short, Campos' research presents us with evidence of a language that is still valued and used in the remoter Agusan Manobo *barangays*, but which is undergoing 'language shift' in the more accessible villages where there are larger numbers of Visayan settlers and a degree of intermarriage. However, the Manobo language is largely under-used in church life, with only a very small percentage using the Manobo translation of the New Testament.

Dulangan Manobo

In researching the place of the vernacular Scriptures among the Dulangan Manobo, the author was able to interview three leaders within the Association of Dulangan Manobo Evangelical Churches (ADMEC), and an SIL translator who has been a member of the Dulangan translation team since 1976, and is currently acting as consultant for the Old Testament translation.

Mission was attempted among the Dulangan Manobo by Filipino, Cebuano-speaking evangelists in the 1960s and 1970s but, according to the Dulangan leaders, these evangelists were largely unsuccessful because the Dulangan people had almost no competency in the Cebuano language.[388] Dulangan Christians trace the beginning of an indigenous Dulangan church to the inauguration of a literacy programme in the

[385] Ibid, 55. 2% reported that they prayed using a mixture of Manobo and Cebuano.
[386] Ibid, 56. Only 2% of respondents said their church used Manobo exclusively; 2% said a mixture of Manobo, Cebuano, Tagalog and English Scriptures were read; 4% a mixture of Manobo, Cebuano and English; 2% Cebuano and Tagalog and 2% said their churches used Cebuano and English.
[387] Ibid, 56.
[388] "Interview of the leaders of ADMEC with the author", February 14, 2015, 1-2.

mid-1970s which enabled Dulangan Manobo to begin reading portions of New Testament Scripture that had been translated at intervals since 1955. The literacy programme was inaugurated by SIL and the Translators Association of the Philippines (TAP), and the translated Scriptures available at that time were integrated into the programme as reading materials for use in the literacy classes. Church planting happened as a natural consequence to the literacy classes. As one of the Dulangan leaders phrased it, "There was a cell group in each literacy class. When there were people who could read in a group they would begin to talk about starting a church."[389] By 1988 there were 75 Dulangan Manobo churches, in which year they also formed themselves into the Association of Manobo Bible Churches, Inc. (AMBCI).[390]

The Dulangan Manobo New Testament was completed in 1988 and today, according to the Dulangan church leaders, it is the only translation being used in the ADMEC congregations. If there are Cebuano-speaking visitors to a congregation, the leaders claim that a pastor will still preach in the Manobo language, but will also take time to interpret into Cebuano for the visitor. "We feel close to our language," said one of the Dulangan leaders and "Our young people also read the Manobo Bible, even though they attend school." When asked if there are any ADMEC members who read the Cebuano Bible in their homes, one leader replied, "Yes. They will sometimes compare it with the Manobo Bible they are reading. It is also a way for them to learn Visayan."[391] The dominant role of the Dulangan language and

[389] Ibid, 1.
[390] Douglas M. Fraiser, "Loggers, Settlers and Tribesmen in the Mountain Forests of the Philippines: The Evolution of Indigenous Social Organization in Response to Environmental Invasions (PhD. Diss. University of Florida, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, Inc., 2007). 125. The AMBCI eventually changed its name to ADMEC; see above, page 130.
[391] *Interview with Author,* 3. Here the respondent uses the word "Visayan" as referent for the Cebuano language.

Bible in church life, according to the Dulangan SIL consultant, has been the critical factor in the growth of Dulangan Manobo churches.[392]

In summarising the place of vernacular Scripture within these indigenous Christian communities in Mindanao, outside of MABCAM, it would appear that only among the Dulangan Manobo is the mother-tongue translation being enthusiastically utilised. The indigenous languages are still vital to the life and identity of the peoples they represent, but the translated Bible appears to be declining in its vitality among Blaan-speaking churches and has, as yet, been largely treated with indifference by Christians among the Agusan, Matigsalug and Obo Manobo. The conundrum posed by the latter scenario has meant the need for concerted Scripture Engagement programmes to all three people groups, with a view to educating local churches on the value of owning, reading and studying copies of the Bible in one's mother tongue. This state of affairs corresponds to what we have already observed within the MABCAM churches surveyed.

Summarising the Reasons for Declining Interest in Vernacular Scriptures

The author's dialogue with church leaders and Bible translators regarding current attitudes towards indigenous language translations of the Bible, produced responses that can be grouped within four categories—education and prestige, demographics, pastoral training and translation.

Education and Prestige

The Blaan church leaders reported a sizeable number of Blaan CAMACOP members who have graduated from tertiary-level education and are now in professional employment. These members are proficient in Cebuano and English and like to worship in these languages also. Their presence in congregations adds momentum

[392] SIL Consultant to the Dulangan Translation Project, "A personal interview with the author," February 14, 2015, 2.

to what is already happening through the change in demographics.[393] Campos' research among the Agusan Manobo revealed that the disruption in language transmission to younger generations is also in part due to the presence of schools. Children are obligated to reach a certain fluency level in Cebuano, the medium for instruction in the classroom. This results in parents or grandparents conversing with these children in the Cebuano language to ensure they are equipped for the classroom.[394]

Demographics

The Blaan CAMACOP leaders highlighted the presence of Cebuano-speaking people within their congregations on Sunday mornings and reasoned that to read the Cebuano Bible, and to conduct the service and teach using Cebuano is important if these non-Blaan-speaking worshippers are to understand the message. Two of the church leaders interviewed confessed that the language they choose for preaching depends on the congregation they are addressing. If there are a significant number of Cebuano-speaking worshippers present then they will opt for Cebuano as their medium. These leaders also claimed that the main reason for the rise in Cebuano-speaking worshippers is intermarriage between the latter and Blaan-speaking members.[395]

Within the Agusan Manobo communities, Campos lists cultural assimilation as a reason, especially in non-remote *barangays*, for the disruption in language transmission to younger generations. She reasons that living together with Cebuanos, Boholanos, Ilocanos, Ilonggos and Tagalogs, leads to Manobo wanting to

[393] *Interview of leaders of SMCC,* 3.
[394] Campos, *Language Attitudes,* 60
[395] *Interview of leaders of SMCC,* 2.

"assimilate their culture to the 'culture of success,' i.e. using the prestigious language Cebuano."[396]

Pastoral Training

With the exception of the Dulangan ADMEC congregations, the church associations surveyed are serviced by programmes of pastoral training that were originally initiated by foreign mission agencies and which have never used the indigenous languages as the medium for training. This arrangement was adjudged by all those interviewed to be a critical factor in language attitudes within their respective church groupings.

The training provided for CAMACOP churches has relevance to both the Blaan and Obo Manobo churches. Training provided at the CAMACOP regional Bible colleges or at the Ebenezer seminary in Zamboanga City is considered tertiary-level education and for this reason needs to be taught in the English medium. Even at APBS (see above, n. 366), designed to facilitate training for non-professionals who cannot afford the cost of studying full-time, the medium for education is predominantly a mixture of Cebuano and English with a minor role for the Blaan language.[397] The Blaan church leaders admitted that sometimes new pastors, freshly graduated from Bible College, are keen to use English and that this sometimes provokes a negative reaction from church members.[398] The Obo SIL translator declared her own opinion that CAMACOP pastors, trained in English and unable to speak in Manobo are not able to value vernacular Scriptures "that speak to the heart. So they will use Cebuano or English to teach."[399]

[396] Campos, *Language Attitudes,* 60.
[397] *Interview of leaders of SMCC,* 3.
[398] Ibid, 4.
[399] "Interview of SIL Consultant to the Obo Translation Project with the author", April 01, 2015, 4-5.

A similar dynamic can be found at work among the Agusan Manobo churches, many of whom have undergone training offered by the Free Methodists. Rose Campos shared with the author her experience with a group of Manobo church leaders for whom she had organised a workshop on the use of mother-tongue Scriptures; the workshop had taken place just a few months before our interview. She reported that because the Free Methodist's Light and Life Bible College in Butuan uses the medium of English, some graduates, upon their return to serve in a Manobo church, are unable to use Manobo vocabulary for words like 'praise' or 'compassion'. According to Campos, this has resulted in Manobo being "Christianised using the English language and the gospel is not shared to them totally in their own language. So it is a bit foreign."[400]

The majority of churches within Matigsalug Manobo territory belong to the General Baptist denomination and rely for training on the MBI. In the words of the UMLCA staff interviewed for this research, "Cebuano is the medium of instruction at MBI. When they preach, even their outline is in Cebuano. When they pray it is Cebuano. So when they [graduates] go to an area they take their bias from MBI with them."[401]

The SIL consultant to the UMLCA made the point that the student body at Bible schools like MBI represent a number of different languages and so the schools "default to a common language, e.g. Cebuano. So all of the graduates' thinking about theology is in Cebuano, not in their own languages."[402]

The Translation

Previously in this chapter, one of the reasons given by MABCAM members why they preferred to read the Cebuano Bible was the difficulty they encountered in attempting to read the Manobo translations available to them (see above, page

[400] "Interview of Rose Campos with the author," December 6, 2014, 1-2.
[401] *Interview of leaders of UMLCA,* 2.
[402] SIL consultant to the UMLCA, "Email correspondence with the author," October 04, 2015.

120). This also was a trait which emerged from some of the church leaders' interviews out-with MABCAM.

The Blaan CAMACOP leaders admitted that, "Anything written in Blaan is hard to read. There are certain things you have to observe when reading Blaan which, if you ignore, will mean it does not make sense. The Cebuano is easy to read and we can read it much more quickly."[403]

In response to a question from Campos to Agusan Manobo church leaders, asking why they were reluctant to use the mother-tongue Scriptures in their churches, one reason given was that they did not know how to read in their own language and that reading in Cebuano was much easier; another was that some of the Manobo words used in the translation are very deep and only understood by older Manobo.[404]

The UMLCA staff also acknowledged that reading the Matigsalug Bible is demanding, not because there are faults with the translation but because church leaders are not familiar with reading in their own language: "If they read it, they read very slowly because they are still trying to familiarise themselves with it. That is also an obstacle. They have not learned how to read our language."[405]

These difficulties suggest that some element of the work of translation such as the revision process is perhaps being neglected, but it also points up how the increase in state provision of education and the multiplication of local elementary and high schools is affecting the ability of younger generations to read in their mother-tongue.

[403] *Interview of leaders of SMCC*, 5.
[404] *Interview of Rose Campos,* 1.
[405] *Interview of leaders of UMLCA*, 2.

Analysing the Data

In this section we shall probe for explanations of the causes of declining interest in the mother-tongue Scriptures that we summarised in the previous section. The data from indigenous Christians which we have collated and examined in the previous two sections, suggests that a general indifference towards translations of the Bible into the indigenous languages is attributable to what we might call a gradual "Visayanization" of Mindanao's *Lumad* cultural space. The reasons given by church leaders and translators read as symptoms of such a process.

Firstly, we will consider the issue of demographics. The indigenous communities of Mindanao are no longer culturally isolated from what used to be classified as "lowland Visayan culture." The author has already documented the migration policy of the Philippine governments in the decades following World War II which attracted large numbers of Visayan settlers to Mindanao. This huge influx of settlers and their desire for land was abetted by the network of roads built by logging companies. These roads moved timber out and ushered settlers in, setting in motion demographic change and cultural disruption (chapter two, page 62). This irruption of settlers into the world of Mindanao's cultural minorities has led to mixed-ethnic communities of *Lumad* and Visayan settlers developing in the island's hinterlands, which in turn has led to intermarriage and other forms of cultural assimilation. This is reflected in churches situated within what were once purely *Lumad* domains.

Anicia Del Corro, translation consultant to the Philippine Bible Society, has observed this process at work within other language groups in the Philippines, particularly in western Luzon among speakers of Pangasinan and Pampango. In a paper which she wrote for *The Bible Translator*, Del Corro draws attention to the reduction in percentage terms of those who speak Pangasinan within the province of Pangasinan and focuses in particular on changes within the city of Dagupan, at the centre of

what would normally have been considered a stable Pangasinan-speaking area. What the city has become in terms of a hub for business, an educational centre, a popular place for tourists and its access to the modern media conveniences of cable TV and internet, has given birth to a heterogeneous populace that demands a common language. That common language is English for some, but for most of those living in Dagupan and most of Pangasinan it is Tagalog.[406] In what Del Corro calls a context of "language endangerment" as far as the Pangasinan language is concerned, the choice of Bible is also affected. In interviews with two local Protestant ministerial fellowships, only fifty percent of the pastors from one fellowship and twenty percent of those from the second were revealed to be from Pangasinan. This influx of pastors from other language groups, in tandem with the overall increasing vitality of the Tagalog language, has inevitably reduced the numbers of those who preach using a Pangasinan Bible and/or the Pangasinan language, in addition to having a diminishing effect on sales of the Pangasinan Scriptures.[407] Even if there is no discernible increase in immigration of people from other language regions within the Philippines, an increased connectedness with a national language like Tagalog, made possible by road and bridge construction and/or access to the internet can expedite what Del Corro calls "accelerated language change" within a minority language and even language loss.[408] This corresponds with Campos' findings on language attitudes among the Agusan Manobo and her suggestion that less remote *barangays*, easily accessed by outsiders, have experienced demographic changes and a disruption in attitudes to the indigenous language.

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[406] Anicia Del Corro, "Language Endangerment: The Case of the Pangasinan Bible," *The Bible Translator* 61, no. 2 (2010).
[407] Ibid, 68-69.
[408] Anicia Del Corro, "Bible Translation Overtaken by Change," *The Bible translator* 66, no. 3 (2015): 302, 309. In this more recent article Del Corro's concern is with the languages of Pampango and Bolinao, also in western Luzon, and outlines how improvements in physical infrastructure has changed how both languages are spoken, has reduced the number of people who can speak the Bolinao language and who want to read the Bolinao New Testament.

Secondly, there is the influence of schools. The power of education to impact language use among indigenous Christian communities is also a by-product of the 'Visayanization' of the *Lumad* heartlands. Areas of interior Mindanao settled by Visayans very quickly became the locations for new schools. The Philippine state's provision of schools in these remoter sections of the island was naturally available to the children of *Lumad* and settler families alike, and became another potent element in the cultural upheaval absorbed by *Lumad* communities. Blaan pastors commented on how language use in congregations would conform to the language preference of young, upwardly mobile graduates from higher education; Campos' research also uncovered the extent to which Manobo-speaking adults opt for the *lingua franca* when speaking to their children or grandchildren with a view to preparing for the language medium of the classroom. Del Corro discovered that 90% of the parents she interviewed in Pangasinan spoke Tagalog to their children; the remaining 10% used Pangasinan but lived in *barangays* that were far from town centres.[409]

Thirdly, the training of church leaders; the training which trainee pastors from four of the five church associations receive is in Cebuano and/or English and as we have noted above, is a critical factor in language attitudes among pastors and within congregations, according to those interviewed. This is a feature of ecclesial life among indigenous communities that has its origins in the Visayanization process, but also given assistance by foreign missionary polities. The majority of Blaan and Obo Manobo churches belong to CAMACOP; the Agusan Manobo to the Free Methodists. In chapter two it was noted that both these mission agencies opened Bible colleges and initiated programmes using the English and Cebuano language medium, but nothing in any of the *Lumad* languages (chapter two, pages 54-55 & 67-69). The General Baptist Mission followed suit with the Matigsalug by using

[409] Del Corro, *Language Endangerment,* 68. Del Corro also found the same to be true among Pampango families; See Del Corro, *Bible Translation,* 303.

Cebuano as the medium at the MBI. This was essentially a policy of convenience; by using a common language in a context like Mindanao, whether English or Cebuano, these agencies' Bible training institutions could equip church leaders simultaneously from a multiplicity of ethnic backgrounds.

A fourth factor is the challenge of the translated Bible. Information shared by interviewees, both within and out-with MABCAM, shines a spotlight on the difficulty in reading the text for some indigenous Christians. This enigma can also be traced to the influence of Visayanization. In her study on the Pampango and Bolinao New Testaments, Del Corro drew attention to how accelerated change within a spoken language may not be reflected in the language of a particular Bible translation. The ramifications are that the language of a translation feels archaic to a modern reader. Del Corro's article featured the Pampango translation which, by the time the entire Bible was dedicated in 1994, had taken twenty-four years to complete and was suffering from a low distribution rate.[410] Her own evaluation of the translation at completion time was that it was best suited for someone forty to fifty years of age. It was, in her assessment, no longer appropriate for its intended audience, i.e. readers eighteen to thirty-five years of age.[411] Del Corro lists the reason for accelerated change as being proximity to Manila and that Tagalog is a prestigious language. The potency of these two features is further augmented by easy access to radio and TV.[412] Del Corro insists that a translation should not take longer than ten years to complete if it is not to be overtaken by change. "Within a period of ten years, the language can stay generally homogeneous."[413]

[410] Del Corro, *Bible Translation,* 303.
[411] Ibid, 301-02.
[412] Ibid, 302. Del Corro illustrates how, at the time of writing, Manila as a city had become a more intense influence on the Pampango culture. In the 1970s a trip from Pampanga to Manila took two hours. By the year 2000 it took 45 minutes.
[413] Ibid, 313.

The changes effected upon the Pampango language and the resultant effect on usage of the Pampango translation of the Bible are analogous to the context within the church associations and *Lumad* communities surveyed for this thesis. The increasing "Visayanization" of *Lumad* communities and language has been a catalyst for language change. This, in turn, has made it more difficult for *Lumad* Christians to read translations of the Bible in their languages, especially considering the age of some of the translations. Campos' selected quotations from the Agusan Manobo pastors' workshop, referred to above, reveal that their difficulty with reading the text of the Agusan Manobo New Testament was the volume of archaic vocabulary that they reckoned only older Manobo could understand (see above, page 138). The workshop took place in October 2015, fifteen years after the dedication of the Agusan New Testament which itself had taken twenty-five years to complete. It is highly likely that the Agusan Manobo language has endured a considerable degree of language change.

It is clear from Del Corro's research that though languages can evolve quickly, there are procedures translators can use to compensate for this kind of change, such as a speedier translation process. However, the level of difficulty involved in reading a vernacular translation can also be attributed to the latter arriving late on the scene, long after a *lingua franca* Bible has become 'dug-in' and established itself as being the only authoritative and legitimate version. Smalley draws our attention to this very dilemma for the mother-tongue translator: "A new translation in a new language . . . may be rejected because it does not literally match the translation in the dominant language of the area, even if [clearer] and more accurate." [414]

The SIL translation teams are also cognisant of this enduring loyalty to a well-established major language translation. Their response has been the Scripture Engagement schemes, already referred to above within the Matigsalug, Obo and

[414] Smalley, *Translation as Mission,* 85.

Agusan communities (see above, page 134); it remains to be seen if the tide can be turned in favour of the vernacular translations.

The obverse response by the Dulangan Manobo towards the translation of the New Testament in their language vindicates the concept that Visayanization has had an adverse effect upon vernacular Bible reading. We have already established that the Dulangan Manobo people had a very poor understanding of the Cebuano language when attempts were made to evangelise them by Cebuano-speaking preachers in the 1960s and 70s (see above, page 132). This was due to their geographical isolation from Visayan settler communities in their homeland. Though the Dulangan, as with *Lumad*s in other regions of Mindanao, endured the impact of immigrant settlers and loggers arriving in the 1960s, the violent nature of their encounter with settlers and loggers led to them rejecting assimilation and moving on to settle in areas where no immigrants had as yet penetrated.[415] In the author's interview with Dulangan church leaders they stated that their parents' generation kept their distance from any Visayans within their territory.[416] This lack of an interface with Visayan settler culture rendered them immune to being Christianised by Visayan evangelists and becoming fluent in the Cebuano language. When they began to respond positively to Christianity it was through literacy classes, begun in the mid-1970s, where they were taught to read their own language using Dulangan portions of the Scriptures as reading materials. From the beginning, the only Bible that Dulangan Christians were familiar with was the Bible in their mother tongue; there was no need for a Scripture Engagement programme to teach these new believers the value of having access to the Bible in their own language.

[415] Frasier, *Loggers, Settlers,* 82-107. See in particular page 87, n. 56.
[416] ADMEC, *Personal Interview,* 2.

Reflecting on MABCAM's Response to Vernacular Scriptures

Comparing the data from MABCAM with the survey of five other church associations that represent large communities of *Lumad* Christians in Mindanao demonstrates that, with the exception of Dulangan Manobo Christians within the churches of ADMEC, the general indifference toward reading the vernacular Bible within MABCAM churches is typical of other *Lumad*-majority churches within the island and a product of the same forces; i.e. Visayanization and accelerated language change.

Visayanization has occurred within MABCAM churches in a region of Mindanao that was once a solidly *Lumad* domain. Three of the four factors, considered above, which contribute to Visayanization have also been at play within the region of Manobo where MABCAM churches have been formed, namely, changes in demographics, the emergence of schools and difficulties with the translated Bible related to accelerated language change.

The years of sustained settlement by Visayan immigrants and commercial logging through the 1960s and 1970s have changed the demographics of the highland areas of Davao del Norte and Bukidnon where the majority of MABCAM churches are situated. In most villages where a MABCAM church is situated, Manobo-speaking members live alongside Cebuano-speaking Visayans. Commenting on changes he witnessed in the region of Bukidnon he was familiar with, former SIL translator and anthropologist Richard Elkins described the Philippine government's objectives in this period as being,

> ". . . interested in the development of these areas in order to contribute to the recuperating economy of the country and to relieve the pressure on the overpopulated areas in the north. Part of this program included attempts to bring tribal cultures into the mainstream of Filipino life through community

> development, education and by extending civil law and authority into these areas."[417]

The settler presence, as noted above, is facilitated by improved infrastructure, which in turn provides access to other elements of majority language culture. A network of what were once logging roads are now maintained as *barangay* roads by local government and these, alongside the steady forward march of electricity and national TV networks into villages, multiply the opportunities for connecting with the mainstream culture and majority languages of the Philippines.

Within this region Manobo children now grow up learning to speak Cebuano and Manobo equally well and can access state-provided elementary and high school education. The data from MABCAM interviewees analysed above showed that 82% of those who have completed some level of formal education prefer to read the Cebuano Bible. This is in contrast to five out of seven of those who can read but have not participated in the formal education system at any level (see above, page 118). The data suggests that state education speeds up the process of Visayanization with a resultant effect on the choice of Bible being read by *Lumad* Christians.

The Manobo language spoken by MABCAM members has also undergone the accelerated change discussed above and is exemplified in the reasons voiced by some MABCAM interviewees for preferring to read the Bible in Cebuano:

> "Manobo has deep words and sometimes I slip up reading it." (Interview 19)
>
> "I have two Manobo Bibles but I don't often read them because they are deep." (Interview 23)
>
> Qu. "But what do you feel as you read a Manobo Bible?"
>
> Ans. "Some of it is very deep and hard to understand, whereas the *bisaya* is easy." (Interview 34)

[417] Richard E. Elkins, "Culture Change in a Philippine Folk Society," *Philippine Sociological Review* 14, no. 3 (July 1966), 162.

> "If we read the Manobo there are very deep words. Even though I am Manobo I cannot read it very well. But the *bisaya* we can understand immediately." (Interview 37)

These views are indicative of circumstances described above by Del Corro (see above, page 142) when the spoken language has undergone accelerated change while the language of the Bible translation has remained static. Too many words clearly have an archaic feel to MABCAM readers. Del Corro also insisted that to gain acceptance with a younger readership, a translation should not take longer than ten years to complete. The completion period for all three of the New Testaments, translated into languages spoken by MABCAM members, was beyond 30 years.

Concurrent with this dynamic of language change endured by MABCAM Christians, coupled with the slow pace of translation has been the steady entrenchment of the Cebuano Bible. The precedence of the Cebuano Bible and its well-established position within churches has also made it difficult to convince MABCAM members to switch to vernacular translations. In the minds of some MABCAM readers the Cebuano translation is the measuring stick by which to evaluate the others.

> "I noticed sometimes that the Dibabawon translation did not always correspond with the *bisaya* translation for certain verses or passages. (Interview 04)

> I read a Manobo Bible in the past but I was not able to read it very well because we need to base it as ever on the *bisaya*. Even though it is our language we find it hard to understand it because the sound is different." (Interview 70)

> Qu. "Have you read a Manobo Bible?"

> Ans. "Yes occasionally I have borrowed one from the pastor to read. Only very occasionally. The important one is the *bisaya*." (Interview 71)

Another facet of Manobo translations that discourages some readers, aside from the archaic quality of some vocabulary, is that the Manobo Bibles are more amplified in their translations: "It takes a longer time to say something than the

bisaya (Interview 12) . . . I prefer the *bisaya* because the Manobo is long (Interview 14) . . . It goes the long way round (Interview 15) . . ."

This demonstrates that the use of dynamic equivalence (see above, page 116-15) causes some dissonance in MABCAM members' reading of the biblical text in the mother tongue, actually working as a disincentive for moving away from the comfort of the Cebuano Bible. Christians used to a more literal translation that is committed to formal equivalence are more likely to react negatively to a dynamic equivalent translation.

Another important factor in directing monolingual speakers to become bilingual and even prefer the second language for particular activities is that of prestige. An SIL translator, Mariana Slocum, who was involved in the translation of the New Testament into the Paez language in Colombia, insists that prestige is a vital component in promoting use of a newly introduced vernacular translation,[418] and Smalley points out that people will switch to other languages "for more prestigious purposes like education, writing or public expression without resentment or threat to their identity as speakers of the lower language in the hierarchy for local, informal situations." Prestige, according to Elkins, is a form of wealth for Manobo and just as desirable as material affluence.[419] Campos concludes that Manobo living in non-remote *barangays* alongside Visayan settler populations are willing to "assimilate their culture to the 'culture of success', i.e. using the prestigious language Cebuano."[420] Though none of the MABCAM interviewees declared prestige as a reason for their preference for the Cebuano, we cannot discount it as a possible motivating factor.

[418] Mariana Slocum, "Goal: Vernacular Scriptures in Use. A Case Study from the Paez of Colombia." http://www.scripture-engagement.org/content/goal-vernacular-scriptures-use; Accessed on February 23, 2016.
[419] Elkins, *Introduction,* xvi.
[420] Campos, *Language Attitudes,* 60.

The one variable which highlights an exception to the status of the vernacular Bible outlined above, is that of "location" and in particular the MABCAM zone three. In zone three, those who prefer to read a Manobo translation of the Bible outnumber those who prefer to read a Cebuano translation (Fig. 7, appendix B) and no preacher from zone three was recorded teaching in the Cebuano language (Fig. 9, appendix B). Zone three churches are all located in the Talaingod municipality within the province of Davao del Norte. Until very recently this municipality was bereft of infrastructure. A road linking the municipality to the provincial capital in the east and the province of Bukidnon in the west was opened quite recently in 2009. Internet access is still non-existent and there are only three elementary schools within the whole municipality. Being a municipality that until quite recently was very inaccessible means it has not witnessed an influx of Visayan settlers similar to that within the municipalities of Kapalong and San Fernando where MABCAM zones one and four are respectively situated.[421] The municipalities of Kapalong and San Fernando also have more developed road networks and internet infrastructure. This lack of "Visayanization" and infrastructure under-development in zone three has allowed the Manobo language to maintain a high level of vitality which, in turn, has sustained a greater degree of loyalty to the Manobo language in both written and oral form within this zone. This reality conforms with what has already been observed concerning the Dulangan and how a lack of "Visayanization" has allowed fidelity to a vernacular Bible translation to flourish.

Reflections on Mission and Bible translation

The struggle to establish vernacular Bible translations at the centre of ecclesial life among the *Lumad* Christian communities of Mindanao reveals there is no inevitability about indigenous Christians opting for a mother-tongue translation of

[421] The breakdown in percentage terms of the Visayan and Lumad populations of the municipalities of Kapalong, Talaingod and San Fernando are as follows. **Kapalong**: Lumad-30%; Visayan-70%. **Talaingod**: Lumad-75%; Visayan-25%. **San Fernando:** Lumad-35%; Visayan-65%. These figures were acquired from the municipal offices of these three municipalities.

the Bible if it is available. This is not a state of affairs that is unique to Mindanao and the very existence of the SIL Scripture Engagement scheme points to this being the case.

An example of a translation of the Bible in a minority language suffering similar vicissitudes within a changing cultural context is that of the Scottish Gaelic Bible. A translation of the whole Bible into the Scottish Gaelic language was sponsored by the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SSPCK) in the eighteenth century and was finally completed as a whole Bible in 1801.[422] In the early nineteenth century, Protestant missionaries, especially Baptists and Congregationalists, evangelised in the Highlands of Scotland, then the heartland of Gaelic-speaking mainland Scotland, using the Gaelic Bible and Gaelic-speaking evangelists. The success of this mission was in turn reinforced by the formation of Gaelic school societies which taught Highlanders of all ages to read the Gaelic Bible and were, according to Meek, probably "the most powerful of all missionary forces within the Highlands."[423]

Despite the strong link established between evangelical spirituality in the Highlands and Gaelic language, Donald Meek could declare in the mid-1990s that the need to use Gaelic in Highland churches had declined, Gaelic-essential charges had vanished from mainland Scotland and that the Highland churches were for the most part, not resisting this "erosion of language."[424]

The causes for this "erosion" which Meek highlights are consonant with those which have contributed to a similar eclipse of language within the churches of Mindanao's indigenous peoples. Durkacz, writing in 1983, cites how English made headway into

[422] Victor Edward Durkacz, *The Decline of the Celtic Languages: A Study of Linguistic and Cultural Conflict in Scotland, Wales and Ireland from the Reformation to the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983), 67-68.
[423] According to Meek, from 1797 to 1850 there were over 80 Gaelic-speaking missionaries active in the Highlands. Meek, *The Scottish Highlands: The Churches and Gaelic Culture*, 28-29.
[424] Ibid, 39.

the Highlands through education and through seasonal migration to the Lowlands in search of employment, all of which equates to the headway made by the Cebuano language in to the highlands of Mindanao, i.e. there were critical factors which facilitated familiarity with the dominant, neighbouring culture.[425] He also comments on the enthusiasm for learning English by Gaelic speakers. English, writes Durkacz, "was seen as the language of commerce, the path to prosperity."[426] Again, this is a sentiment that resonates with the willingness on the part of Mindanao's *Lumad*s, for reasons of prestige, to conform to the norms of Visayan culture and learn to speak Cebuano. Meek also describes Protestantism in the Highlands as being committed to a classical style of Gaelic for religious discourse that young people struggle to understand and, that Christian denominations operating in the Highlands are not proactive in ensuring a supply of Gaelic-speaking ministers for Gaelic churches, or in providing training that equips ministers to serve in a Gaelic-speaking context.[427] These factors have similarities with the Mindanao context in that the modern, spoken form of the minority language has experienced accelerated language change while that used in religious texts or Christian worship has remained static. Also, the need for a strategy to preserve the use of Gaelic in churches is comparable to SIL's Scripture Engagement programmes; in both contexts intervention has been considered essential to arrest the decline in usage of the indigenous language.

Notwithstanding the statements from advocates of vernacular Bible translation as an essential component of Christian mission, it is not at all clear from the Scottish Gaelic and Mindanao contexts that having access to the Bible in the mother tongue is an essential ingredient for the successful appropriation of Christianity. In chapter

[425] Durkacz, *The Decline,* 217-20. Durkacz also makes the important point that even though the Gaelic Society schools taught literacy in the Gaelic tongue, this only served to awaken a desire in the literate Gaelic speaker to learn English, 220-221.
[426] Ibid, 217.
[427] Meek, *The Scottish Highlands,* 40-42.

two, a brief examination of the history of Christian mission on Mindanao by the C&MA showed that, despite having no evangelists trained in the indigenous languages of Mindanao and a lack of interest in translating the Scriptures into any of the *Lumad* languages, the indigenous peoples of Mindanao responded positively, and in large numbers, to the gospel presented by C&MA workers. There was a strong Blaan church in existence previous to the translation of the Blaan New Testament and, even though the latter was enthusiastically read and studied when published even as it is now losing ground to Cebuano and English translations, there was no suggestion from the Blaan church leaders that there had been a decline in the Blaan churches that paralleled declining interest in reading the Blaan New Testament. Similarly, the declining popularity of the Gaelic Bible is not in itself indicative of a declining Christianity within the Scottish Highlands.

If there is no "iron logic" between access to a Bible in the vernacular and the growth of Christianity in some locations, it must also be stated that in a similar vein, reading the Bible in one's mother tongue does not necessarily guarantee a deeper and/or more transparent comprehension of the text. In chapter six, examination of the relevant data for this thesis will present Manobo Christians as vigorous students of the Cebuano Bible whose comprehension is not handicapped by their preference for the Bible in the *lingua franca.* SIL translator, Kenneth Nehrbass, in an article in a 2014 issue of *The Bible Translator,* narrates how he designed and conducted an experiment to test the validity of the mantra that "speakers who are fluent in a vernacular and language of wider communication (LWC) will inevitably understand the Scriptures better in their "heart language.""[428] Nehrbass conducted his experiment among the southwestern Tanna-speaking people of Vanuatu for whom the trade language was Bislama. His conclusion was that "multilingual speakers can

[428] Kenneth Nehrbass, "Do Multilingual Speakers Understand the Bible Best in Their Heart Language? A Tool for Comparing Comprehension of Translations in Vernacular Languages and Languages of Wider Communication," *The Bible Translator* 65, no. 1 (2014): 88.

work out the meaning equally in the LWC or vernacular", but *contra* Nida, "they have an overall more positive experience reading and answering questions in the LWC."[429] Nehrbass does not, of course, advocate downgrading the importance of translation into the vernacular. He does, however, recommend discarding the heart-language argument as a reason for vernacular Bible translations and admits that, "Despite "vernacular education movements" many language communities will never use their written mother tongues to the same degree they use the written *lingua franca*. In most countries, a strong education is one that fosters literacy in the LWC."[430]

Nehrbass' findings and conclusions correspond with what the data of this thesis is suggesting about why MABCAM members prefer the Cebuano Bible.

Revisiting Sanneh

Sanneh has written that for African Christians, "Faith forged in the mother-tongue Scriptures was a door to a new world of social and political change."[431] We may well conclude that for the Manobo Christians of our survey population, and indeed for the wider population of *Lumad* Christians on Mindanao, converting to Christianity and appropriating the Bible has helped them negotiate the social and political changes imposed upon their way of life and provided new opportunities for prestige and self-advancement. Access to the Bible in their mother tongue, however, cannot be considered an essential element in this process. Sanneh also extols the translation work of Samuel Crowther, the first African to be ordained as an Anglican bishop (1843) who worked, as Sanneh puts it, "to get behind new inventions of the language and colloquialisms that break the continuity with the original." He was eager to restore original, lost terminology to popular usage in Bible translation as "a

[429] Ibid, 100.
[430] Ibid, 103
[431] Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* 209.

trophy of the collective cultural memory."[432] Crowther believed that the recovery of forgotten words and phrases would, "to the rising generation . . . sound sweet and agreeable."[433] However, translators who have done this on Mindanao have not found the expressions "sweet and agreeable" when used in Bible translation. We have already noted Del Corro's comments on how younger readers struggle to persevere with reading "archaic vocabulary" that they encounter in older Bible translations and that a number of Manobo Christians also prefer the Cebuano Bible because of "deep" words they do not understand within the Manobo translations (see above, page 146).

Despite how the Manobo attitude towards the vernacular Bible appears to contradict Sanneh's thesis, we need to bear in mind the differing contexts. Sanneh's context is Africa and in *Translating the Message* he consistently reminds his readers of that reality. Vernacular Bible translation in Africa had to compete with the colonial European languages of domination, and not so often with other African majority languages.[434] The appeal and power of mother-tongue Bible translations in Africa was its elevation of the dignity and potential of the local over against a colonial narrative that endorsed the superiority of European language and culture. On Mindanao, Cebuano is the language of a separate ethnic group, one that is alien to the Manobo and holds the reins of power on the island. In one sense it does resemble a foreign power. However it is also a closely related Philippine language that is easy to learn, provides the opportunity for wider communication within a multiethnic environment and is a prestige language that offers educational and employment opportunities for the rising generation of young Manobo.

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[432] Ibid, 200

[433] Jacob F.A. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891: The Making of an Elite,* (1969: Evanston Ill, Northwestern University Press), 128; quoted in Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* 200.

[434] "Protestant missions in their translation work made mother tongues the centrepiece of mission. This involved the abandonment of European languages and of alliance with the commercial monopolies of the West, and a commitment to indigenous priorities." Ibid, 162.

Similarly, when an African *lingua franca* did become useful as a medium within a multilingual context it could, like Cebuano within the Mindanao context, quickly eclipse local vernaculars in its popularity. William J. Samarin has written on the development of Lingala in the northern reaches of the Congo River in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when missionaries of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) were active in the region and thoroughly committed to learning vernacular languages and translating Scripture into the same. The European foothold on the Congo acted as catalyst for the development and spread of Lingala as a *lingua franca*, as it became the language of crews on river steamers, soldiers, and labourers at stations and trading posts: all people from a plurality of ethnic backgrounds.[435] Samarin documents how BMS missionaries eventually had to accede to the need for Bible translations in Lingala as the language's ubiquity increased. Samarin records a speech given by a D. Christy Davies at a Protestant missions conference for those serving on the Congo in 1921, when Davies pushed for greater use of the *lingua franca* because Lingala he said "had come in like a flood", and had taken possession of more than a quarter of the whole Congo.[436] In addition, the Belgian colonial government were keen to promote a language of wider use that made it easier to realise the goals of the colonial administration.[437] In short, in an Africa where speakers of indigenous languages discovered new possibilities for social advancement and change as a consequence of the missionaries' prioritising of vernacular Bible translation, similar goals could be realised through an African language of wider communication like Lingala. Heine writes of Lingala, that it has "become a prestige language, the knowledge of which promises social and material advantages."[438]

[435] Bernd Heine, *Status and Use of African Lingua Francas* (Munchen: Veltforum Verlag, 1970), 74.
[436] William J. Samarin, "Protestant Missions and the History of Lingala," *Journal of Religion in Africa* XVI, no. 2 (1986): 152.
[437] Ibid, 151.
[438] Heine, *Status and Use,* 75.

Conclusion

If the findings of this chapter suggest anything, it is that the absolutising of the "translation principle" is not a sustainable dictum within mission strategy. The potential of a mother-tongue translation of the Bible should be determined by context and, in particular, how indigenous peoples interact with the *lingua franca* rather than by uncritical loyalty to a transcendent theory. As a church association with a membership that is almost 100% *Lumad*, MABCAM has grown from the eleven congregations at its inception in 1985 to a current membership of over sixty local churches. Reliance on a vernacular translation of the Bible has not been a contributing factor in the reception of Christianity by the Manobo of central Mindanao who constitute the membership of MABCAM. The rapid Visayanization of their traditional homeland, the consequent evolution of their language, the corresponding slow pace of Bible translation into the Manobo languages and general lack of attention given to Scripture Engagement are a confluence of factors that have led these Manobo Christians, alongside many of their *Lumad* co-religionists on Mindanao, to a place where they are more comfortable with the Cebuano language Bible as the central text of their faith. This choice has not limited their opportunity to grow numerically as a church association and neither has it in any obvious way curtailed their capacity to adequately understand the Bible. It is the Manobo understanding of the Bible that we will begin to examine in the following chapter.

Chapter Five. Manobo Christians and the Reconfiguration of Biblical Authority

A book edited by Anne Kwantes, commemorating the centenary of Protestant Christianity in the Philippines, was given the title, *A Century of Bible Christians in the Philippines*.[439] The title encapsulates the single feature of Protestantism that has set it apart from Catholicism in the Filipino mind—the authority of the Bible in determining what constitutes authentic Christianity. The Manobo Christians representing the survey population of this thesis are members of an association of "Bible Churches"[440] and, as such, can be grouped within the fold of Philippine Protestantism as a body that affirms the authority of the Bible. Pertinent to this thesis, however, is what part 'Scripture as authority' plays in the localising of Christianity among the Manobo, the answering of which question will form the subject matter of this chapter.

This chapter will begin with an outline of the authority of Scripture as understood within conservative evangelicalism in the post-World War II era. This is necessary, given that OMF missionaries arrived in the Philippines and began evangelistic activities among the Manobo during this period and because OMF is generally viewed as an organisation with a doctrinal outlook in tune with this sector of Protestantism.[441] We shall also examine OMF sources to illustrate how/if the use of the Bible by missionaries who served among Manobo, conformed to evangelical norms and to what extent missionaries sought to inculcate Manobo Christians with the conservative evangelical notions of scriptural authority. The following section will then move on to examine how Manobo Christians have positioned the authority of Scripture *vis-á-vis* the indigenous sources of authority within the Manobo cultural matrix, which in turn will be followed by a reflection on how Manobo appropriation

[439] A. C. Kwantes, *A Century of Bible Christians in the Philippines* (Manila: OMF Literature, Inc, 1998).
[440] Manobo Bible Church Association of Mindanao (MABCAM).
[441] See chapter one, n. 15.

of the Bible contributes to the wider discussion on the relationship between text and indigenous societies; this discussion will conclude that, contrary to the essentialist position of some scholars, previously oral communities like the Manobo are capable of creating vibrant new identities around Christian texts. The final section will discuss how Manobo Christians' engagement with the Bible has issued in "mutual reconfiguration" of both the evangelical doctrine of Scripture as spiritual authority and indigenous Manobo religiosity.

Evangelicalism and the Doctrine of Scripture in the Post-World War II Era

"Biblicism" has been listed by David Bebbington as one of the four major defining features of evangelicalism, a word that signifies the centrality and authority of the Bible for evangelical Christians.[442] In the early twentieth century, however, evangelicals in the United States and the United Kingdom found themselves divided between those who had been influenced by higher criticism and Darwinism and those who reacted against this influence and its perceived threat to biblical authority.[443] In the United States, the conservative backlash against "modernist theological tendencies" led to a loose coalition that became known as fundamentalism, a movement which caused widespread division within several mainline denominations – notably Presbyterians and Baptists - as people aligned themselves with fundamentalist or liberal/modern visions.[444] In Britain, the unity of evangelicalism came under similar strain with some parallel consequences;

[442] The other three defining features making up what has become known as Bebbington's "quadrilateral" are "conversionism," "activism" and "crucicentrism." Bebbington, *Evangelicalism,* 1-19.
[443] George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 32-39.
[444] Ibid, 65-66.

although mainline denominations did not experience division and separation, some leading institutions did.[445]

This movement toward a more conservative Christianity on both sides of the Atlantic centred on what evangelicals considered the crux of the matter, namely, a defence of the authority of the Bible. In America, the debate turned on the defence of biblical inspiration and inerrancy. In Britain, though, the Bible was defended as divinely inspired there was less interest in defending the doctrine of inerrancy.[446] In considering this intensity of effort to preserve the integrity of the Bible, it is also important to note that in the United States and United Kingdom growing numbers of evangelicals were committed to a pre-millennial eschatology.[447] It is highly likely that this particular doctrine of the Second Advent also helped fuel efforts at defending scriptural authority. After all, a convincing explication of the reign of Christ, in a future millennial kingdom, has always been dependent on a literal reading of the New Testament. As Bebbington puts it, "Those who were tied to literalism could hardly avoid believing in verbal inspiration."[448]

According to Brian Stanley, by the 1940s, "Fundamentalism had stifled intellectual endeavour among US and UK Christians."[449] Following the end of World War II, however, conditions were amenable to growth and this ignited new movements of

[445] Bebbington documents the split within the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Student Christian Movement (SCM); Cf. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism,* 181,188.
[446] Bebbington attributes this to the "restraining influence" of Henry Wace, Dean of Canterbury Cathedral (1903-1924) and an Evangelical who advocated countering the higher criticism coming out of Germany with "better criticism," rather than an appeal to inerrancy. Cf. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism,* 189-190.
[447] In the United States it was a particular form of pre-millennialism, known as Dispensational Pre-millennialism that was in vogue within fundamentalism. Dispensationalism, as it is sometimes called, teaches that history, as outlined in the Bible is divided into a number of discernible ages, or "dispensations." The distinctive of each age is the means, prescribed by God, by which people may receive salvation. Cf. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)., 48-55.
[448] Ibid, 190.
[449] Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Billy Graham and John Stott* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2013), 94.

change on both sides of the Atlantic. In the UK the creation of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF) and the Tyndale Fellowship in the 1940s led to British evangelicals committing to serious scholarship in biblical studies that married a commitment to the divine inspiration of Scripture with the best in critical studies.[450] In the United States, a 'new evangelicalism' emerged in this period wishing to distance itself from the narrowness and anti-intellectualism of the dispensational theology of fundamentalism. However the movement's willingness to engage with the precepts of biblical criticism always threatened its unity and provoked more intense debate and division on the issue of inerrancy.[451]

By the 1970s, though evangelicalism in the United Kingdom shared similarities with the "new evangelicalism" in the United States (which eventually just became known as "evangelicalism"), evangelicals in the US, in comparison with those in the UK, were much more preoccupied with the issue of 'inerrancy', leading to an insistence that not just the biblical writers were inspired, but that every written word is an inspired piece of text. This made it difficult for 'progressive evangelicals' in the United States to introduce even the most innocuous elements of biblical criticism into discussions on hermeneutics without drawing fire from the vocal and more militant defenders of the fundamentalist worldview.

In concluding this section, it is important to be mindful of two factors that are connected with the evangelical defence of the Bible's authority in the twentieth century and relevant to the subject matter of this chapter. One factor is a consequence of the emergence of fundamentalism in the inter-war years in the

[450] Ibid, 94-104.

[451] For a discussion on the differences in attitude on "inerrancy" between British evangelicals and American fundamentalists, see Stephen R. Holmes, "Evangelicals, Fundamentalism and Theology," in *Evangelicals and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom During the Twentieth Century*, ed. David Bebbington and David Ceri Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Holmes defends the position that, "inerrancy is not a characteristic British evangelical doctrine of scripture." 358. He makes the claim that British evangelicals have preferred to speak of the Bible's authority rather than its inerrancy, 354.

United States, and that is the Bible School movement. Unable to win over the major denominations within the United States to their cause, Christians committed to the mission and values of fundamentalism left these bodies and, according to Marsden, "built their own networks of separate institutions."[452] These new church associations, in turn, established their own institutions for the training of pastors and overseas missionaries, giving birth to a network of Bible schools across the United States and Canada. Brereton's definitive study on the Bible School movement reveals that the majority of the schools taught dispensationalism (see above n. 447) and were committed to the verbal inspiration of Scripture and its inerrancy.[453] The importance of the Bible School movement for this thesis is that all OMF missionaries from the North American continent who served as church planters among the Manobo of central Mindanao were trained in Bible schools in the United States and Canada.[454]

A second factor to keep in mind is what Harris describes as the priority of epistemology for fundamentalism. The leading question for a fundamentalist, according to Harriet Harris, is "How can we know?" and the answer is "Because the Bible tells us so."[455] According to Harris, biblical conservatives in the United States, ". . . took from Common Sense philosophy an empirical-rationalist framework for

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[452] Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism,* 66. This separatist spirit was another feature of American fundamentalism that was not replicated in the U.K. "Inerrancy" became a doctrinal shibboleth along which churches and Christian institutions in the U.S. divided in large numbers.
[453] Brereton, *Training God's Army,* 17-20. A matter relevant to this thesis is that Henry Frost, the first CIM director for North America, allied the mission with the Bible school movement when the latter was still in its infancy. Part of the reason was to ensure they could recruit candidates who subscribed to premillennialism. In 1895 the CIM magazine, *China's Millions* printed a list of "approved Bible Schools." Cf. Alvyn Austin, "Only Connect: The China Inland Mission and Transatlantic Evangelicalism," in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914: Theology, Theory and Policy*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids MI, Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2004), 300-01.
[454] Bebbington writes that the lack of an equivalent network of colleges was one reason why British fundamentalism could not significantly disrupt denominational life in Britain. Cf. David Bebbington, "Baptists and Fundamentalism in Inter-War Britain", in *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism,* 110.
[455] Harriet Harris, "Fundamentalist Readings of the Bible," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From 1750 to the Present*, ed. John Riches, The New Cambridge History of the Bible (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 336.

their biblical apologetics, and this has been a significant factor in the formation of the fundamentalist understanding of scripture."[456] In short, the deductive argument for the inerrancy of the Bible is that if the Bible is inspired, and God does not err, then the words not only contain but are the Word of God.[457] Harris' analysis has commonality with what Marsden has written on how conservative evangelicals of the nineteenth century embraced the empirically based rationality of scientists like Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton,[458] but also with Brereton's research into the Bible School movement. Brereton concludes that Bible School faculty viewed themselves as emulating the methods of science. Scripture, says Brereton, was treated in a manner akin to scientific data, "given by God in much the same way as he presented scientists with the data of nature."[459] This use of some of the motifs of scientific discourse to defend the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture was undoubtedly driven by the context within which apologists of fundamentalism operated. Scientific positivism had become the dominant epistemology by the early decades of the twentieth century. By replicating scientific methods in the study of Scripture, conservative Christian educators and apologists were, as Brereton suggests, lending some of the light of scientific certainty to the Bible.[460]

OMF, Scriptural Authority and the Philippines

Evangelical missionaries from the US who arrived in the Philippines after World War II hailed from denominations and agencies that could trace their origins to the fundamentalist/modernist controversies in the early twentieth-century United States, already referred to above. Though it was an international and not an American mission agency, some features of the OMF's polity in the first two decades of their presence in the Philippines (1950s-1960s) reveals an affinity with

[456] Harriet A. Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 130.
[457] Harris, *Fundamentalist Readings,* 341.
[458] Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism,* 129.
[459] Brereton, *Training God's Army,* 94.
[460] Ibid, 94

fundamentalist Christianity. For example, with regards to evangelism and planting new churches, OMF was reluctant to cooperate with the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), at that time the largest Philippine Protestant denomination and a member of the WCC.[461] In a minute discussing the possibility of OMF's collaboration with the UCCP, one encounters a description of the latter as, "an organisation . . . not true to the teaching of the Word of God" [462] and on another occasion an obstacle to possible affiliation with the UCCP is the "modernistic emphasis in its seminary and many of its churches."[463] Indeed, ten years later, in 1967, OMF Philippines elected to join the newly formed Philippine Council of Fundamental Evangelical Churches (PCFEC).[464]

This author did not uncover evidence that OMF leadership in the Philippines were preoccupied with advocating loyalty to particular doctrines such as inerrancy and/or a pre-millennial eschatology. The incident with the UCCP does suggest, however, that in keeping with a general trait within fundamentalism, there was a reluctance to partner with mainline denominations whose views on the authority of Scripture did not sufficiently equate with their own. Nevertheless, OMF as an organisation was not committed to the doctrine of inerrancy nor any particular eschatology. The only reference to the importance of these doctrines for OMF members in the 1970s can be found in the 1966 edition of OMF's *Principles and Practice* where it is stated that, "Candidates must submit with their formal applications written statements of

[461] The UCCP was formed in 1948 from a union of 2 Protestant denominations and a number of individual congregations. Cf. Sitoy, *Heritage and Origins,* 485-506.
[462] Minutes of the Philippine Field Council of OMF, March 1956, 3.
[463] Minutes of the Philippine Field Council, February 1957, 2.
[464] Minutes of the Philippine Field Council, January 1967. At the prompting of more "open" evangelicals within the PCFEC the council changed its name to the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches in 1968. Cf. Averell U. Aragon, "The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches," in *Chapters in Philippine Church History*, ed. Anne C. Kwantes (Manila: OMF Literature Inc., 2001), 370.

their convictions about the divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures; . . . the personal return of the Lord . . ."[465]

OMF, Scriptural Authority and the Manobo

This section narrows the focus to the OMF missionaries who evangelised among the Manobo and examines what was taught concerning the authority of the Bible. It has already been noted above that all OMF members from the United States and Canada who arrived to serve as missionaries among the Manobo had trained within American Bible institutes, and that these schools for the most part were similarly committed to the doctrines of inerrancy and premillennialism.[466] Those workers from outside of North America and who attended missionary training institutes in Australia, the UK, Switzerland and the Netherlands received training where the divine inspiration of the Bible was affirmed but without a necessary overt commitment to inerrancy and dispensationalism.

Once proficient in the Manobo language, OMF missionaries used the Bible in their evangelism and were always at pains to inculcate in new believers a reverence for scriptural teaching and a commitment to follow it in Christian living. In 1977, missionary F wrote asking people to pray for interest on the part of some hearers to increase and "that definite steps will be seen of obedience to God's word as they are taught."[467] In another letter he describes helping a team of Filipino Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship members to prepare "Bible Studies, testimonies and sanitation lectures" for a mission trip to an Ata village.[468] In a follow-up letter to this, he reported that "It was a bad time because of cutting fields and building houses; few were in the village. Still there are none who value His word above their work."[469] In

[465] Principles and Practice of OMF, August 1966, 5.
[466] For information on the number of OMF missionaries who graduated from North American Bible Schools and served among the Manobo, see chapter one, n. 17.
[467] Missionary F, "Prayer Partner Letter," (December 1977).
[468] Missionary F, "Prayer Partner Letter," (March 1978).
[469] Ibid, (March 20, 1978).

1984, missionary E put a great deal of effort into literacy training for the express purpose of facilitating Bible study and the reading of Scripture by the Manobo in their own language.[470] In a Field Council meeting in 1979, comment was made on how a booklet entitled "100 Questions Answered from the Bible" was being well received and proving effective amongst new believers, and there was an update on the translation of a New Reader Scripture series being produced for Manobo believers.[471]

Audio and visual media were also employed as a means to increase access to and augment people's understanding of the life of Christ. An organisation called Gospel Recordings provided cassette players which OMF workers distributed to villages, particularly those without a local missionary or Manobo preacher. One missionary to the Manobo, writing in an article published in the OMF magazine in 1983, illustrated the potential of audio technology in quantitative terms: "We have placed missionaries in 4 villages at present and have tape players in about another 25 villages."[472] Recordings of Scripture readings, sermons, question and answer sessions and "gospel songs" in the Manobo language were the materials normally available to listeners on these devices. However, making the Scriptures accessible to the Manobo was always the priority of the audio tapes and when it became clear that many listeners were more interested in the music, "It was therefore recommended that we do shorter tapes of Scripture only."[473]

We will not dwell on the content of OMF missionaries' preaching in this chapter; that is for chapter six. Nevertheless, it is worth considering for a moment the place

[470] Missionary E, "Prayer Partner Letter," (June 1984).
[471] OMF Philippines, "Mindanao Field Council Minutes," (1980) no. 6C.
[472] OMF International, *East Asia's Millions* (U.S. edition), April 1983. Gospel Recordings is an organisation, begun in 1939, that provides audio visual material for use in evangelism, particularly in places "where there are no translated Scriptures and no viable local church." https://globalrecordings.net/bn/about. (Accessed October 20, 2016). The cassette players referred to here were manually operated using a hand crank.
[473] OMF Philippines, "Mindanao Field Council Minutes," (1978) no. 30.

of Satan and the origin of evil in the message of these early missionaries because it has ramifications for value judgements which MABCAM members eventually adopted with regard to indigenous forms of authority. The OMF sources that this author accessed reveal that missionaries spent a lot of time studying and trying to understand Manobo indigenous religion. They viewed the world of shamans, spirits, sacrifices, sorcery, omens and reverence for sacred places as a complex that shaped Manobo life and culture above all other influences. "Almost every major decision, activity and tragedy has spiritual implications," said one.[474] Sometimes attempts were made to write sensitively on the subject as in the following anonymous piece of writing when the author stressed that,

> "It is vital so [to?] show our own ancestors were also pagan spirit worshippers and had to repent and change so that we don't make Manobo feel inferior or picked on. Now we all must return to the true God of our first ancestors. We can stress that the true God of the Manobo at first was Jesus and his father and our ancestors left him for false gods, demons. But now we must return and leave the false gods."[475]

However, in general missionaries interpreted Manobo traditional religion theologically as a domain under the control of Satan. "The battle is against Satan and generations of tradition," wrote one missionary in 1977.[476] Another, writing in 1979, when asked by a *datu* to go fetch a "medicine man" from another village to treat a man who was very ill, refused, claiming that God would be angry with him if he, the missionary, had anything to do with the medicine man. He did offer to pray with the sick man and this was accepted. The missionary explained his action in writing saying,

> "I made clear to all that God is angry with sin and evil spirits and demands we have nothing to do with them. Also, he wants us to trust him alone in these

[474] Missionary F, "Prayer Partner Letter," April 1977.
[475] "Basic Manobo Beliefs" no date or author available.
[476] Missionary F "Prayer Partner Letter," April 1977.

> things. We believe it is another step God has worked in order to turn these people from Satan to himself."[477]

In reading the correspondence of all OMF workers who pioneered evangelism among the Manobo of central Manobo, these comments can be considered representative of how they interpreted the spiritual domain of the Manobo world. For missionaries, calling upon the spirits conflicted with the doctrine of monotheism and performing sacrificial rituals conflicted with the doctrine of Christ's once-for-all, atoning sacrifice for sin. This explains why evangelistic lessons included teaching on Satan and evil. Satan, along with a host of demons who do his bidding, was the point of departure for explaining the origins of the Manobo pantheon of spirits and their role within the spiritual realm. They were presented as those who work contrary to the will of God and endeavour to keep the Manobo in darkness and blind to the light of God.

The use of the Bible in evangelism and a commitment to turn new converts into readers and students of the Bible was considered essential to the missionaries' strategy for seeing the Manobo freed from spiritual darkness and a church established. "The emerging church will need to be able to read God's word," was the firm conviction of one.[478] Another voiced their firm belief in the centrality of the Bible if new Christians were to remain in the light: "These people were only a few years ago living in darkness. Now the light has come and is growing stronger but how much stronger it could be if these people had teachers from their own tribe to teach them to read [and of] God's message."[479]

When evangelisation began to produce fruit and embryonic churches were forming, missionaries were always keen to report the signs of a developing biblical literacy among new converts. Missionary E shared the response from one young man when

[477] Missionary G "Prayer Partner Letter," June 1979.
[478] Missionary F "prayer Partner Letter," December 1977
[479] Missionary E, "Prayer Partner Letter," June 1984.

asked why he wanted to learn to read: "Because I want to learn to read the Word of God for myself," he replied.[480] An Area Director's report in 1983 made mention of a Manobo All Believers' Conference that year where "Many . . . were eager to share what God had taught them from the Scriptures. Note was made of those who had memorised Scripture, even though 12 months previously they had not been believers."[481]

The priority of the use of Scripture in church planting was further refined in 1987 when OMF missionaries decided to use the Chronological Bible Teaching (CBT) approach which had been developed by Trevor McIlwain, a missionary with the New Tribes Mission among the Palawano people in the Philippines. This approach was to be used for evangelism and for the training of church leaders at the Central Manobo Bible School of Mindanao (CMBSM), which began classes in January 1988.[482] The method involves a presentation of the gospel from Scripture by teaching the "story" of salvation chronologically from Genesis through to the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.[483] This method of teaching the Bible is known today among MABCAM members simply as CBT. The method was selected because its story-telling style was believed by the missionaries to be more culturally appropriate for Manobo listeners.

Germane to this thesis is the opening CBT lesson which introduces the Bible to listeners with the objective being to teach the theme that "God communicates with man." The doctrine of biblical inerrancy is not referred to in the lesson outline and McIlwain discourages any attempt to prove that the Bible is the Word of God. His advice is that "It is better to leave the proof of the divine authorship of the Scriptures right where it is—in the Word of God." The proof that the Bible is the

[480] Missionary E, "Literacy teaching among the Manobos in Central Mindanao in the Philippines."
[481] OMF Philippines "Area Director's Report," 1983.
[482] OMF Philippines, "Mindanao Monthly Report," (February 1988), 1.
[483] The rationale and content of this course is presented in detail in, Trevor McIlwain, *Building on Firm Foundations*, 7 vols. (Sanford, Florida: New Tribes Mission, 1988).

Word of God will, says McIlwain, "slowly but clearly be evidenced through the story of the Old and New Testaments."[484] Lesson four in this first phase of the CBT is also pertinent to this thesis because of what is taught concerning the origin of Satan and his angels. In going through the lesson McIlwain teaches on angels who were expelled from heaven with Lucifer and equates these with the spirits with whom indigenous people interact: "While we must be careful not to appear to be attacking their beliefs in the early stages of teaching, nevertheless, if they ask, let them know that all of the spirits in which they believe were originally the angels of God but are now under Satan's leadership."[485] As with the content of the evangelistic message discussed above, this use of the Bible in evangelism to categorise the indigenous pantheon of spirits as synonymous with Christianity's world of demons, corresponds with what was believed and taught by the pioneering OMF missionaries.

In concluding this section it is clear that OMF missionaries, in evangelising the Manobo of central Mindanao, operated with a prototypically conservative evangelical doctrine of Scripture. Earlier we submitted that some aspects of OMF polity in the Philippines with respect to the UCCP also suggested a fundamentalist tone (see above, page 162ff), but that other tenets of fundamentalism such as an adherence to premillennialism and the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture did not surface within the sources. The same can be said for sources relevant to Manobo ministry.[486] Though the missionaries were doubtless loyal to the doctrines of inerrancy and infallibility, their context of mission among the Manobo of central Mindanao did not present them with opponents aggressively traducing their beliefs. A softer, more integrated style sufficed for introducing Manobo to the Bible's

[484] *Evangelism: The Old Testament*, 7 vols., vol. 2, Building on Firm Foundations (Sanford, Florida: New Tribes Mission, 1988), 102.
[485] Ibid, 129.
[486] On the matter of Scripture, Ginther wrote: "I do not think that we taught much about the inerrancy or infallibility of the Scriptures but focused on this being God's word to men." Dave Ginther, email, October 18, 2014.

authority. Nevertheless, it is this author's view that these missionaries' assiduity in analysing all elements of Manobo culture through the lens of Scripture, their diligence in Bible usage for evangelism and church strengthening and their endeavours to produce converts with a comparable loyalty to the Bible has its roots in the fundamentalism of the North American Bible School movement from which the majority of the pioneering missionaries to the Manobo graduated. The move to incorporate the CBT course, developed by McIlwain, was essentially a pedagogical change, affecting how the gospel was taught to the unconverted and how leaders were trained. As we shall see in the following chapter, the introduction of CBT did not significantly alter the content of what OMF missionaries considered essential to the gospel nor how they interpreted the spiritual domain; what it did was to codify and reinforce the theological schema already in use alongside a commitment to biblical authority.

MABCAM and other Christian influences

In closing this section it is important to take into consideration the influence of Pentecostal/Charismatic (PC) Christianity on MABCAM churches. Since the 1970s, PC Christianity has been steadily growing as a percentage of the Philippines' Christian population. Kessler and Rüland, on the basis of data collated in their very thorough 2006 survey of Charismatic Christianity in the Philippines, estimated that 15% of Philippine Catholics and 39% of the nation's non-Catholics were involved in the Charismatic renewal movement throughout the islands, accounting for 19% of the nation's Christians.[487]

Members of MABCAM have always interrelated with the membership and leadership of other Christian denominations in the central Mindanao region and pastors from Southern Baptist, Fundamental Baptist, CAMACOP and those from a

[487] Christl Kessler and Jürgen Rüland, *Give Jesus a Hand! CharismaticChristians: Populist Religion and Politics in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 92-93.

variety of PC background churches are frequently invited to speak at church anniversary thanksgivings, weddings and regional conferences. No formal studies have ever been conducted on the influence of PC Christianity on indigenous groups on Mindanao but the reality of influence is clear in a number of ways. It is common now to hear MABCAM pastors and members shouting out the terms "amen," and "hallelujah" during church services and using the expression "in Jesus' name," when praying for healing and deliverance for members. Almost all interviewees from zones one, three and seven who have access to a radio make time to listen to what they call the "Eagles Ministry" programmes which are aired daily on an FM frequency from a broadcasting station in Tagum, Davao del Norte. A particular programme that was a favourite for many of the interviewees was the live broadcast of a PC, non-denominational event every Friday evening which features special music, preaching and prayer for healing and deliverance.[488]

PC pastors and evangelists share a commitment, with evangelicals, to the Bible as the Word of God and the concomitant doctrines of inspiration and even inerrancy.[489] What is distinctive of the Pentecostal reading of Scripture, however, is a tendency to be less concerned with separating the context of the historical text from that of the reader and instead to be preoccupied with the text as a living message able to impact the reader here and now. As Yong has put it, "Pentecostal approaches see first and foremost the *rhema* or living and revelatory Word of God making demands on each generation of readers in a way that collapsed the horizons of what the text pointed to and that of the text's later readers."[490]

[488] This event is held at the municipality of New Corella, not far from Tagum City in Davao del Norte province and is organised by the Eagle Ministry Crusade Foundation Philippines Inc. https://www.facebook.com/emcfmradiostation; accessed online, November 21, 2016.
[489] Amos Yong, "Reading Scripture and Nature: Pentecostal Hermeneutics and Their Implications for the Contemporary Science and Theology Conversation," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 63, no. 1 (2011): 4.
[490] Ibid, 5.

PC evangelists and Bible teachers also tend to interpret the indigenous spirit world as identical to the New Testament world of demons. As Bernice Martin observes,

> "The morally ambiguous spirits of pre-Christian practices are absorbed into the Pentecostal system as the devil and his host of spiritual agents . . . The indigenous cosmos and spiritual sensibility are transmuted but kept alive with Christian belief and practice."[491]

Julie and Wonsuk Ma, who have both served as Pentecostal missionaries in the Philippines, make it clear that new converts "should know there is no such thing as "ancestor spirits" but only demons pretending to be ancestor spirits."[492]

Analysing the Data

In chapter one, in the sections entitled "Data Collection" (chapter one, page 19) and "Analysing the Data" (chapter one, page 23) this author outlined how data was gathered during field work and that interviews and recorded sermons were the primary sources for original data. The author also explained how a three-way dialogue was initiated between raw data, primary sources and core elements of Manobo cosmology and culture, as the means for analysing the data and providing a description of the Manobo encounter with Scripture. In the following sections we shall present the results of this process as they pertain to Manobo Christian's adoption of the Bible as a source of spiritual authority.

MABCAM Members, the Bible and Spiritual Authority

The Bible versus Indigenous Sources of Authority

The data from interviewees suggests a strong continuity on the part of MABCAM members with the conceptual understanding of the Bible subscribed to by OMF missionaries. Of those who participated in the interview process, 67% (41/61) used

[491] Bernice Martin, "Tensions and Trends in Pentecostal Gender and Family Relations," in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013), 117.
[492] Julie C. Ma and Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/CharismaticMissiology* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2010), 113.

the term "Word of God" in communicating how they might explain to someone else what the Bible actually is. When asked how they might respond to someone who countered that it was actually written by people, most replied in a manner similar to the following:

> "Yes, people wrote it but they were guided by God to write. He blessed them so they would know what to write." (Interview 01)
>
> "This word was written by people but they were given power by God to write it, so that all those who have not yet heard this word of God can all hear it." (Interview 28)
>
> "The Bible is something made by people, but the people who made the Bible were guided by the Spirit of God. People like the apostle Paul, as they were travelling around with Jesus, they were always writing and what they wrote remains today as part of the Bible." (Interview 41)

Among those who affirmed the Bible as Word of God, interviewees of thirty-six years of age and above were the majority at 59% (24/41). Levels of education also reveal interesting statistics. Some 73% of those who endorsed the Bible as Word of God had either not completed any level of formal education or had progressed no further than elementary school. In summary, therefore, older MABCAM members with little or no experience of formal education were those who most enthusiastically defended the Bible as the Word of God.

Other data which augment these statistics are concerned with how the Bible's authority is perceived *vis-á-vis* the traditional authorities of *baylan* and *datu* which, in turn, represent respectively the authority of the *diwata* and the Manobo law or *batasan*. Regarding the latter, the author recorded references from 54% of interviewees (33/61) who believe that the Bible has superseded customary law.[493]

[493] By way of clarification this percentage figure does not necessarily mean that 46% of respondents believe the Bible has not superseded traditional law. It means that others did not take the traditional law as the point of departure as they reflected on life for Manobos today and that of their pre-Christian past.

This conviction was built on a variety of premises. For some, traditional law was just the views of men:

> "It's true that we have our Manobo culture, but it is not clear. It is just words and not the truth. The Bible teaches the truth so that a person can be saved and forgiven." (Interview 12)

> "Yes we have the Manobo culture but it cannot save, it is just valid for here on earth. It is important that we follow Jesus, there is salvation with him. Our culture has lots of traditions but they do not give salvation. We learn in the Bible where we can go and we can have assurance of salvation. The Manobo have lots of beliefs in the spirits like the *busao,* but the Bible teaches that only through Jesus can we have salvation. The old teaching is just their beliefs." (Interview 18)

For some, traditional law was too connected to the spirits whose authority has now been superseded by the "Lord and the Bible":

> "Yes, we have ours. It used to be we had only the *bantoy* and no Bible. But the truth is that God gave those *bantoy* in times past to punish people because they would not believe his commands. But now there is the Lord and the Bible and so we do not follow the *bantoy* or offer blood, because Jesus died for us and was crucified." (Interview 20)

> "Our Manobo law is a mistake. It is against God's will. I am thinking of the beliefs that we have here in the hills. Things like the need for sacrificing animals, other gods. They need to have the truth declared to them." (Interview 54)

Other participants viewed the past, when traditional law had the ascendancy, as a time of violence.

> "We need to make things new because in the past, when we practised the old ways, their character was really wicked; there were those who would kill people and other things." (Interview 49)

> "There are lots of laws here in the Bible, and we can do them. We can also live long lives, not like in the past, we would kill someone very quickly. If we heard even a little talk of an issue we would take our guns and quickly go out and kill someone. Now we are here with the Bible, given by the Lord, a good path and we can live long, along with our children whom we like to talk to about this . . . and we want to believe, live long and also study the Bible." (Interview 62)

With reference to age, those aged thirty-six and over formed a slim majority of 51% (17/33), of those more likely to speak negatively regarding traditional law over against the Bible. The level of formal education once again produced an interesting variable with 75% (25/33) of those with no formal education or experience only of elementary education declaring for the Bible against traditional law.

Data was also gathered on the extent to which interviewees took the spirit world as the point of departure when assessing traditional sources of spiritual authority. Some 46% of the interviewees (28/61) declared the spirit world complex and the authority of the *baylan* as being in conflict with the authority of the Bible:[494]

> "I know there is a God through the Bible, what is good in the culture I will keep, but I will abandon what is not good. Like sacrificing for example, I will leave that behind." (Interview 04)

> "Before they said they were calling on God, but they were really calling on spirits, those at the cliffs or in the *Balete* trees. The Bible tells us these are all false gods and we should not serve them. If we do we are an enemy of God. Lucifer was thrown out of heaven because he rebelled. I do not serve the spirits because they are the servants of Lucifer." (Interview 07)

> "The new law now from the Bible, God likes that. Like in the past my parents would dance and a different spirit would come upon them, and so my father in the past could heal the sick. That was the old beliefs. But now for us, those old beliefs we have got rid of and now look to God for the new beliefs." (Interview 35)

Variables to these figures corresponded to those in the previous section where the Bible was declared to have superseded traditional law. Older members, those aged thirty-six years and above, represented 54% (15/28) of those who believe there is no longer a place for activities connected with traditional ritual. Those with no background in formal education or with achievement only at the elementary level represented 75% of those who strongly asserted their conviction that the Bible's authority had pre-eminence over that of *baylan* and the world of spirits.

[494] As with n. 493 above, this does not mean that 54% of respondents therefore believed in the ongoing validity of honouring the spirits and maintaining the sacrificial rituals.

In the young people's Bible study two of the participants during one evening meeting also made plain their feelings on traditional religious practice. One girl asked rhetorically, "Why is it . . . when we know the Lord is ready to help us, that he is merciful, but instead we go for help, for healing to the false gods?" She concluded that she thought her mother, who would encourage people with an illness to go visit an elderly traditional healer, "was under the influence of the evil one." (Bible Study 01). In the same meeting a young man concurred and said, "Those false gods are against the will of our living God. I have a story like that. My mama is used by an evil spirit to do things, but I do not believe in it." (Bible Study 01).

If we combine the responses from those who viewed the Bible's authority as having replaced that of traditional law with those who believed that its spiritual authority had transcended the claims of the spirits, while making sure that no participant is counted twice, we arrive at a figure of 80% (49/61) of interviewees willing to acknowledge the Bible's superiority in relation to one or other indigenous forms of authority.

A caveat to this is that a number of interviewees did speak positively about Manobo culture and stated that there were elements to their way of life commensurate with the Bible's teaching; 36% (22/61) responded in this manner. However, activities related to the spirit world were never included within those elements. There was instead repeated reference to Manobos' propensity for acts of generosity, kindness and hospitality, their respect for elders and willingness to work at maintaining peaceful relationships. What is significant about these qualities is that they are fundamental to the ethical standards demanded by the traditional forms of authority presided over by *baylan* and *datu*, and which the majority of interviewees believe has now been left outdated by the Bible. This raises the need to be aware of ambiguity in Manobo Christians' enthusiastic approval of biblical authority, a theme we shall investigate further in this chapter and in chapter six.

The Bible and the Manobo within a Wider Debate

Though some responses from interviewees lack precision around the details of biblical authorship, the answers display an underlying conviction that the Spirit of God was at work in the very human process of writing and compiling the books of the Bible. This understanding of the Bible as the Word of God and inspired by the Holy Spirit, demonstrates a conceptual understanding in continuity with mainstream evangelicalism. The same can be said regarding the high percentage of respondents who considered the Bible a higher form of authority to indigenous arrangements; this too is a position that harmonizes with the biblicism of the evangelical missionaries who viewed biblical literacy as essential for neutralising the power of the old authorities. Later in this section, when we consider the role of the Bible in modernity, we shall consider the variables to this data concerning age, levels of education and location mentioned above,

This appropriation of Christianity's central text by the Manobo and what appears as a concomitant rupture with the past has significance within the wider academic discourse on text and culture. Benedict Anderson has written on the potency of texts in shaping nineteenth-century European nationalisms. Print language allowed the bourgeoisie of Europe to imagine thousands of people similar to themselves.[495] That was Europe; the context being studied here is that of a minority highland culture in Southeast Asia, a society that was essentially oral in their recent, pre-Christian past. As a general rule, students of indigenous minority peoples have been hesitant to attribute any degree of importance to the place of written text within these cultural milieus. This has particularly been the case in Africa, which has been a fruitful field for those studying indigenous forms of Christianity within the African Indigenous Church (AIC) movements. In the introduction to her study of the

[495] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 75-76.

Nazaretha Church in South Africa, Joel Cabrita draws attention to this general bias within scholars of these movements:

> "By and large, scholars have been reluctant to turn to the written work of independent Christians – part of their more general insistence that these Christians are intrinsically traditional, and thus supposedly more interested in orality, ritual, and symbol than in literate expression."[496]

Karin Barber has written with an awareness of this position taken in the past by scholars of "Performance Studies" who viewed text as "anathema" to the oral poet because it suggested "the imposition of a scriptocentric view of the world."[497] It is this very "scriptocentrism" that also draws condemnation from R. S. Sugirtharajah with specific reference to the Bible and its use within oral societies in the third world. Sugirtharajah designates the privileging of the textualisation of the Word of God over against the oral, as "another characteristic of colonial hermeneutics."[498]

More recently, concern over the supposed inappropriateness of a print Bible with oral cultures, has also made inroads into the missiological thinking of some sectors of evangelical Christianity. The International Orality Network (ION),[499] formed out of the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization hosted by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in Thailand, recommends a move away from a reliance on print media in communicating biblical truth. It advocates instead, a commitment to principles that are more apt for oral cultural settings. This has implications for the Bible and has led to a call for an "oral Bible": "The "oral Bible" is the singular key to unlocking Church Planting Movements among unreached people groups."[500] One writer explains the oral Bible as a "recording of a core set of stories of the whole

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[496] Cabrita, *Text and Authority,* 23.
[497] Karin Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 70-71.
[498] R.S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Post Colonial Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 68.
[499] https://orality.net/about/, accessed September 15, 2017.
[500] G. Lovejoy and D. Claydon, "Making Disciples of Oral Learners: Lausanne Occasional Paper 54." 2004 Lausanne Forum Occasional Papers, 2005, https://www.lausanne.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/LOP54_IG25.pdf. This document has not been paginated.

Bible from Genesis to Revelation that gives the chronological panorama of God's word as it unfolds in the most central, essential, and fundamental stories of the Bible."[501] Interestingly, though the beginnings of the ION can be traced to 2004, the orality movement's origins go back much further. W. Jay Moon cites McIlwain's publication of his CBT approach in the 1980s as a precursor to what the ION are currently trying to achieve.[502]

This essentialist standpoint on the negative value of texts for oral cultures is no longer universally accepted. Barber writes that more recent work has "rejected the idea of a dichotomy between 'oral' and 'literate' cultures," and instead has focused on how "entextualization" of a discourse makes it available for "repetition, recreation, . . . and thus for transmission over space and perpetuation over time."[503] Cabrita's study has been particularly helpful in revealing the vital place of textual culture for Zulus within the Nazaretha church community. Whereas students of AICs within the Zulu nation tended to portray members as people more committed to the preservation of Zulu customs than to the Christian origins of their movement,[504] Cabrita's research, by way of contrast, presents members as enthusiastic students of the Christian Bible, reading it as "a God-given manual that legitimized new forms of collective and individual action that were often deeply at odds with indigenous religion."[505] Cabrita acknowledges that though there is a discernible attempt on the part of Nazaretha members to preserve "indigenous codes of behaviour,"[506] her central thesis is that their textual culture has also played an important role, even in this process.

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[501] Rick Leatherwood, "The Case and Call for the Oral Bible: A Key Component in Completing the Great Commission," in *Mission Frontiers,* (Sept-Oct, 2013): 38.
[502] W. Jay Moon, "Fad or Renaissance? Misconceptions of the Orality Movement," in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* 40 no. 1, (2016): 18, n. 3.
[503] Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts,* 71.
[504] Cabrita, *Text and Authority,* 5.
[505] Ibid, 12.
[506] Ibid, 13

The textual culture of the Nazaretha community incorporates both the Bible and texts produced from within the community itself. Cabrita documents the publication of five volumes of traditional Nazaretha material containing Nazaretha hymns, prayers and more importantly, "*izindaba*" or "story traditions". The influence of Zionist, then Holiness and Pentecostal missions, which established a presence in South Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, predisposed Nazaretha members to consider the Bible an "open egalitarian book,"[507] to consider it a text "to be followed rather than merely read, and taken as literally true scripts for daily life."[508]

The value of Cabrita's work for this thesis is how it unveils the creative use of text by a previously oral, traditional African culture. The Bible and a published form of an oral text were integral to the spiritual and social formation of the Nazaretha community. This process put the Nazaretha faithful at cross-purposes both with traditional Zulu religious practitioners and with those who considered themselves professionally qualified to instruct Africans on the proper use of Scripture and oral tradition.[509] In appropriating the Christian Scriptures, the Nazaretha have adapted and extended their functionality beyond the already established parameters set by African and missionary theologians alike. In addition, they have invested their own *izindaba* with canonical status, utilising them alongside Scripture to construct an identity that is distinct from local religious traditions; "a smart forward-moving identity" that offers a contemporary way of being African.[510]

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[507] Ibid, 62

[508] Ibid, 76

[509] Cabrita summarises how the Nazarethans' democratic approach to the Bible has unsettled the *amakholwa*, a class of mission-educated Zulu who, by the early twentieth century, had positioned themselves as the elite figureheads of the modern Zulu nation. Educated by missionaries in the principles of historical criticism, the *amakholwa* considered themselves best equipped to interpret the Bible on behalf of the Zulu nation, 65-73.

[510] Ibid, 22. Cabrita also makes the point that Nazaretha do not self-identify as being part of the wider African church community. They view themselves as "part of a larger, broader Abrahamic lineage," as "a cousin rather than a sibling, to Christianity." 55.

Southeast Asia, the wider context of this thesis, is also home to formerly non-literate peoples, from an indigenous religious provenance, who have appropriated the Bible. A number of the large indigenous communities of hill people living at the periphery of China along the borders with Thailand, Burma, Laos, and Vietnam were, according to Nicholas Tapp, acutely aware of their own lack of literacy before their engagement with Christian missionaries, a state of affairs accentuated by their contiguity to China with its literate population and highly developed system of writing.[511] Aminta Arrington has recently completed research on the place of Scripture among one of these groups, namely, the Lisu of western Yunnan in China. Englishman and CIM missionary, James O. Fraser, arrived to work among the Lisu in 1910 and Arrington describes Fraser and his CIM colleagues as missionaries, "who were steeped in a Biblicist tradition of valuing the biblical text and who laid emphasis on the reading of Scripture as the primary means of devotion and expression of spirituality." They brought Christianity, writes Arrington, "into a Lisu culture that at that time had no literate tradition."[512] The Bible was nevertheless enthusiastically adopted by Lisu. Fraser produced a Lisu script that still bears his name and, using this same script, translated the Bible into the vernacular. This Bible is still the main text being used by Lisu Christians today. It is held in high regard and survived the Chinese Communist government's attempts to introduce a new romanised orthography for the Lisu language in the 1950s.[513] Today's estimates are that about half of the 700,000 Lisu are Christian.[514]

The Karen of eastern Burma also had their own mythology of a 'white foreign' brother who would return the gift of literacy to the Karen in the form of a golden

[511] Nicholas Tapp, "The Impact of Missionary Christianity Upon Marginalized Ethnic Minorities: The Case of the Hmong," *Journal of South East Asian Studies* 20, no. 1 (1989): 75.
[512] Aminta Arrington, "Hymns of the Everlasting Hills: The Written Word in an Oral Culture in Southwest China (PhD. Diss., Biola University)," (2014), 4.
[513] Ibid, 7.
[514] Ibid, 5.

book.[515] American Baptists, who arrived to evangelise among the Karen in the early nineteenth century, quickly presented themselves, in the words of Keyes, "as the foreign brothers bringing the golden book."[516] By 1919, around 335,000 Karen, that is about 17% of all Karen in Burma, had become Christian. The translation of the Bible into Karen and the resultant literacy of those who had converted was the beginning of a Karen nationalist movement.[517] As Gravers puts it:

> "Ethnic identity with a fundamental Protestant substance was the first step towards the common Karen nationality which is still upheld by the KNU[518] and probably by many Karens . . . And the Christian religion was not seen as an alien construction. It was, [and?] still is, considered to be the return of the original, but lost, Karen religion."[519]

Having glanced at the use of text, including the Bible, in Africa and the highlands of the Southeast Asian mainland, it behoves us to consider a similar scenario from within the Philippines. One case, well-documented in the highly acclaimed work of Reynaldo Ileto (chapter two, n. 93), is the use of a written Tagalog version of Christ's passion, published in 1814 with the full title of *Casaysayan nang Pasiong Mahal ni Jesucristong Panginoon Natin.*[520] This version of the *Pasyon,*[521] rather than function as a Catholic text that encouraged the Tagalog masses to acquiesce in their lowly position within the societal structures ordered by the Spanish, "made available a language for venting ill feelings against oppressive friars, *principales,* and agents of the state"[522] and acted as catalyst to rouse the Tagalog masses of central

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[515] Mikael Gravers, "Waiting for a Righteous Ruler: The Karen Royal Imaginary in Thailand and Burma," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 43, no. 2 (2012): 349.
[516] Charles F. Keyes, *The Golden Peninsula: Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia* (New York: MacMillan, 1977), 52.
[517] Ibid, 56.
[518] KNU stands for the Karen National Union, a political organisation founded in 1947 which represents the aspirations of the Karen people of Burma.
[519] Mikael Gravers, "The Karen Making of a Nation," in *Asian Forms of the Nation*, ed. Stein Tønnesson and Hans Antlöv (Surrey: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 1996), 253.
[520] The title translates as *Account of the Sacred Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The 1814 composition is a version of the original composed by Gaspar Aquino de Belen in the 18th century.
[521] From this point on the word "*Pasyon"* will refer to the 1814 version.
[522] Ibid, 16.

Luzon to participate in revolt. Though it was not Scripture, but rather a text loosely based on the Gospel narrative, the popularity of the *Pasyon* is relevant to this thesis. It exemplifies the willingness of people, from an oral culture, to be moved by a Christian text and aspire to a way of life that ran counter to the established order.[523] Nineteenth century leaders of peasant revolts, such as Apolinario de la Cruz and Andres Bonifacio, were able to employ the *Pasyon* in their calls for Filipinos to embark on new journeys, only because it was a text already firmly embedded within Philippine peasants' religious consciousness.[524] It was their fluency in the narrative of the *Pasyon* that meant, according to Ileto, ". . . the peasant masses were culturally prepared to enact analogous scenarios in real life in response to economic pressure and the appearance of charismatic leaders."[525]

These accounts from East Asia and Africa draw to our attention that indigenous people have agency when it comes to their engagement with Christian texts. Though colonialism is the political context of all three examples, the reaction to Scripture and other texts is dynamic, not one of 'native passivity'. Nazaretha members have engaged with Scripture and text to create a new Zulu identity that is modern, even as it preserves indigenous cultural mores. In highland Southeast Asia, the Karen reacted to the Bible as fulfilment of an indigenous hope. In addition, for the Karen, it was also a catalyst for realising a new national identity to counter the nation-forming tendencies of the lowland Buddhist Bamar. For Tagalog peasants in the Philippines, the Christian *Pasyon* provided them with a way of imagining Christian community and nationhood without the humiliation of servitude to a European power. An important feature of this dynamic intercourse of indigenous culture with text is that established proprieties for correct handling of the text were often ignored. Those who had self-identified as legitimate custodians of the

[523] Ibid, 31
[524] Ibid, 29-30. De la Cruz's confraternity, the *Cofradia de San Jose,* arose in Tayabas, central Luzon, in 1832 and was several thousand strong by 1839-40.
[525] Ibid, 19.

interpretive process were frequently by-passed as Scripture and tradition were employed to realise new objectives that had never been contemplated by missionary, priest or scholar. We have already noted that the Zulu *amakholwa* were discomfited by the Nazaretha engagement with Scripture (see above, n. 509), and in the case of Apolinario's *Cofradía* in central Luzon, their creation of an alternative religious community that circumvented clerical authority drew from the friars an order of excommunication.[526] Arrington's research into the Lisu use of Scripture also reveals that the oral aesthetic of Lisu society has not been dislodged by the Lisu Bible; a situation that defied missionary norms. The Lisu practice what Arrington has termed a "liturgical literacy". The Bible is generally not read personally, in silence, but is performed in unison in the public setting of church.[527] For instruction in practical Christian living, Lisu Christians prefer their hymnbook. "The Lisu hymns," writes Arrington, "serve as theological mediator for Lisu Christians, bridging the gap between the text-intensive religion that is Christianity, and the oral world of Lisu culture."[528] Though the missionaries "advocated, and expected, a Christian devotional life focused on personal Bible reading, the Lisu rarely read Scripture outside of a ritualistic context."[529]

Susan Hawley, in her study on the Bible amongst the Miskitu in Nicaragua who were evangelised by the Moravians in the nineteenth century, remarks that missionaries frequently realised they were "not always in control of their message."[530] The case studies above illustrate this point, as will our analysis of the data we have been considering from the Christian Manobo of central Mindanao.

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[526] Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution,* 56.
[527] Arrington, *Hymns of the Everlasting,* 245.
[528] Ibid, 277.
[529] Ibid, 5.
[530] Susan Hawley, "Does God Speak Miskitu? The Bible and Ethnic Identity among the Miskitu of Nicaragua," in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark G. Brett (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2002).

The Bible and Manobo Culture—Mutual Reconfiguration

We have established it as vital to bear in mind that indigenous communities were not passive recipients of Christian text, but actively appropriated these texts and put them to use in ways unintended by the original conveyors. It is likewise vital to remember that the interchange between receptor and conveyor is best conceived as a dialectic rather than a battle for dominance between either of the protagonists. James Cox, in his essay on indigenous religiosity within Zimbabwe, explains that Christianity and indigenous religion have influenced each other in Zimbabwe for nearly 150 years and that neither is practised today as they were at the time of first contact.[531] "The very indigenous roots," says Cox, "receive, adopt, adapt and eventually transform how religion appears in contemporary African contexts."[532] Terence Ranger, writing more generally about indigenous religions, questions the oft-asserted maxim that Christianity and "primal religions" represent "mutually exclusive cosmological spheres," claiming instead that in some continents "Christianity is a *mark* of indigenous identity rather than a denial of it" [italics in original].[533] In short, there are numerous possibilities for change, with the only inevitable outcome being that the version of Christianity being communicated and the receptor culture are both reconfigured in the encounter. As Rafael puts it, "Change is the vernacularisation of outside influences."[534] In this section of the chapter we will examine how appropriation of the Bible has caused rupture with an important metaphysical postulate of the Manobo namely, the place of the *diwata* within Manobo cosmology. We shall also demonstrate how the maxim "the Bible as spiritual authority" has been adopted but transformed by Manobo Christians.

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[531] James L. Cox, "Characteristics of African Indigenous Religions in Contemporary Zimbabwe," in *Indigenous Religions: A Companion*, ed. Graham Harvey (London & New York: Cassells, 2000).
[532] Ibid, 242.
[533] Terence Ranger, "Christianity and Indigenous People: A Personal Overview," *The Journal of Religious History* 27, no. 3 (2003): 263.
[534] Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, 15.

The Gagging of the Spiritual Domain

We have already noted, earlier in this chapter, that 46% of interviewees (28/61) declared the Bible to be a spiritual authority that supersedes that of the *baylan* and the sacrificial ritual of indigenous Manobo religion (see above, page 175). Has missionary theological influence, therefore, successfully reordered how Manobo Christians evaluate the indigenous spiritual domain? Earlier in the chapter it was this author's conclusion that missionaries interpreted the Manobo spirit world as a domain under the control of Satan (see above, page 166). This was despite the observation by a number of missionaries that Manobo made a distinction between *diwata* considered to be "good" and benevolent and more malevolent spirits such as the *busao* and the *aswang* (chapter three, page 97).

In effect, OMF missionaries, and more latterly, Pentecostal evangelists, conceptually reordered Manobo cosmology to correspond with a simple Christian dualism which tended to ignore the nuances and distinctions within the spirit world that were of importance to Manobo. Missionaries merged the world of *diwata*, sacrificial ritual, *baylan,* and traditional healers with that of sorcerer, *aswang* and *busao* to produce an abstracted aggregate of spirit powers and human practitioners. They then presented their relationship as Christian missionaries toward this conceptualised domain as one of binary opposition. Manobo cosmological reality was now branded as Satan's territory while the missionaries with their gospel message and the Bible were the servants of God and his kingdom. The Christian doctrine of Satan was employed to create a dualism that allowed the missionaries to make sense of the Manobo spirit world on their own terms and smooth out the complexities of Manobo cosmology.

This binary construct of "God versus the Devil" has been thoroughly researched by Birgit Meyer during her fieldwork among the Peki Ewe in Ghana.[535] Christian mission to the Ewe had been carried out by the German Pietist mission, the Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (NMG), from 1847 to 1914. In Meyer's words the "missionaries constructed Pietism and Ewe religion in terms of opposition: while they, the missionaries, served God, the Ewe worshipped the devil and his demons."[536] Meyer has called this process the "diabolisation" of the old complex of gods and ghosts within the Ewe culture. By transforming the latter into agents of Satan, their presence and power was reconfirmed and ironically were, by this process, incorporated within Christianity, so to become a part of appropriation.[537]

If we focus on data for MABCAM believers, however, we discover by and large a resistance to the diabolisation of the *diwatas'* domain. Of the twenty-seven interviewees referred to above, only four (14%) directly equated the Manobo spirit world with Satan and the demonic. Two young people from the Bible study group also made a direct link between the demonic and the traditional healing practices used by their parents. However, only one preacher from the twenty-three recorded, made such a link, and a very gentle one at that. In warning members against taking a sick child to a traditional healer, he reasoned that the healer's power would not be from the Lord. The remaining twenty-three interviewees (86%) voiced other reasons why they declared for the Bible and against the *baylan's* authority. For many, acknowledging the power of the spirits was tantamount to worshipping false gods. For others, it was the ineffectiveness of the sacrificial system, and its costliness that made converts of others and for yet others, to whom we shall refer

[535] Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Trento NJ & Eritrea: African World Press Inc., 1999).
[536] Ibid, 84.
[537] Birgit Meyer, "Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 455.

later, traditional religious beliefs and the ritual of sacrifice had been abandoned as belonging to an era that had passed.

There are a number of conclusions we can draw from this data. Firstly, as stated above, we can observe a level of resistance to the self-assured declarations by missionaries and PC preachers that the entire indigenous world of spirit beings is populated by demons in the Devil's thrall. It is possible that for many Manobo, the severity of the disjunction, 'Either of God or the Devil' is viewed as potentially offensive to those who remain committed to traditional Manobo values. In fieldwork conducted by this author for a Masters' degree, this sentiment was expressed very clearly by one interviewee. A MABCAM evangelist recounted his time evangelising in a village in zone 7 when Cebuano-speaking preachers were also present. The MABCAM evangelist witnessed first-hand how the Cebuano-speaking preachers would begin preaching loudly, in the open air, while the local *baylan* was conducting a sacrificial ritual. In his words, this very "confrontational" style contrasted with his own approach. He recounted that he would stay in a family home in the village and make himself available to anyone who wanted to visit and listen to him read and explain portions of the Bible.[538] This hesitancy to condemn the world of *baylan* and ritual as demonic has its roots in cultural complexes we have already examined in chapter three. For example, such condemnation could seriously unsettle the *goinawa* of the *baylan* and his co-religionists. This, in turn, could lead to an explosion of anger from those offended, given that the state of an individual's *goinawa* is directly related to receiving the appropriate levels of respect from other Manobo (chapter three, page 102). Anger, in turn, can lead to violence, something that most Manobo communities fear and which most individuals will go to great lengths to avoid. In addition, resistance to diabolising the world of *diwata* is

[538] Participant 47 in, David Wilson McMahon, "An Analysis of the Contextualization of the Gospel within Manobo Culture, in the Church Planting Programme of the Manobo Bible Church Association of Mindanao (MTh Thesis)," (Belfast: Queens University Belfast, 2013), 25.

also likely to be influenced by a deep-seated cultural memory which acknowledges the beneficent role of *diwata* in providing food for Manobo from their swidden and game from forests and rivers and which differentiated these from the more malevolent *busao* and *aswang* (chapter three, page 97).

Secondly, despite this perceived general unwillingness to use the pejorative term "demonic" as a catch-all category for all spirit beings, we must recognise that the term was used by four of the 27 interviewees and by two participants within the young people's Bible study. This is not insignificant, and if Pentecostal Christianity should continue to accrue more influence within MABCAM it is not unlikely that the Pentecostal reification of demons and spirits may eventually become paradigmatic for MABCAM members' assessment of their indigenous religious heritage. An example of this already having happened within an indigenous people group in the Philippines is provided from northern Luzon by Julie Ma. In her record of ministry among the Kankana-ey people, Ma declares that whereas previously the Kankana-ey believed that spirit beings were departed ancestors, those who are now Christian believe these to be demonic spirits.[539]

Thirdly, though MABCAM members have largely resisted the diabolisation of their spiritual domain, they nevertheless acknowledge the Bible as an authority that has superseded that of the spirits. In fact, 46% of interviewees (28/61) viewed the authority of the spirits and *baylan* as being in conflict with that of the Bible (see above, pages 175ff). The spirits are referred to as "false gods," "other gods," or contrasted with the "God who alone can give life and is the only owner of our lives."[540] The superior place accorded the Bible has, to all appearances, effectively gagged the spiritual domain and nullified its potential for shaping the life of Manobo Christianity, causing what is commonly termed a 'rupture' with the past.

[539] Julie C. Ma, *When the Spirit Meets the Spirits: Pentecostal Ministry among the Kankana-Ey Tribe in the Philippines* (Frankfurt am Main & New York: P. Lang, 2000), 211.
[540] Interviewees 79, 71 & 29.

This appears to be congruous with the intentions of OMF missionaries and with PC Christianity; in fact, according to Meyer, Pentecostals celebrate the notion of rupture even more vigorously than did nineteenth and twentieth-century Protestant missionaries.[541] Despite this seeming rupture chapter six will suggest that though Manobo as Christians no longer appeal to the authority of the *baylan* and the spiritual domain, the essential qualities at the nexus of the relationship between Manobo and spirit world, still play a vital part in shaping the Manobo Christian praxis.

The Bible—Signifier of Modernity

A significant proportion of MABCAM interviewees view the Bible's authority in terms that were never conceived by the OMF's evangelical missionaries. One innovation on the part of these Christians is to conceive the Bible as an important element in their own journey into modernity. Some 48% of interviewees (29/61) made reference to the Bible and its teaching as a signifier of a new era in their history as a people. Manobo customary law and ritual are frequently referred to as being adequate only for a way of life that has passed. The Bible is not imagined as a historical text that pre-dates Manobo culture but as something new which augments what was lacking in their traditional sources of authority:

> "In a previous time, we gentiles did not have the Bible. We were ignorant about his word. He made people, he used people so we would know his word; people like Moses, a servant of God. He showed Moses incredible things and told him to write these down, and Aaron too." (Interview 08)
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> "That is what we all as Manobo followed before. Then the Bible arrived and we were enlightened. The old has gone the new has come. We now need to do what he wants. He tells us what is good to keep and what we should abandon." (Interview 19)
>
> "But the Bible, people made it, but by the wisdom of people which they got through dreams, which has been analysed by scientists and well educated people that this is what should be taught . . . It was correct to use Manobo

[541] Birgit Meyer, "'Make a Complete Break with the Past.' Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostal Discourse," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, no. 3 (1998): 318.

> wisdom in the past, we did not have anything else and nothing to explain to us the meaning. But now we have the Christian way and the way of the government. Before we had rights, now we still do because we are indigenous people . . . But if we consider the Bible, yes we had rights before, that is right, but now we follow new technology, because in the past we had Manobo ways that were not easy . . ." (Interview 21).
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> "I would say that in years past we just did not know about the Bible. We just lived by our culture, but now our education is much greater . . . there are Manobo who have been to school . . . we have teachers who are Manobo, we have a doctor, nurses . . . your children can be educated, we can be educated. Like me, if I continue to serve the Lord, my children can be educated." (Interview 62)
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> "That was the old ways. Now there is a religion and we have truth and can read the Bible . . . So we should follow him, so that we can change and can be educated . . . In the past there were no children who were successful at school because what they were told by the old people was that if they went to school there were people there, like you, who would kill the children." (Interview 63)

The Bible in these selected quotations is viewed as integral to a new era that Manobo have had to adjust to and a new identity that they have adopted as a part of that adjustment. The Bible, perhaps being synonymous for Christianity itself in these responses, is bundled with other more familiar elements of modernity such as education, technology and submitting to the "way of the government." The basic tenet being confessed by these MABCAM members is that appropriating the Bible is *de rigueur* for making a success of the journey into the modern world.

This notion of the dyadic relationship between modernisation and Christianity is not new and has been given attention within academic studies. Meyer makes the claim that Pentecostal churches in Ghana have strong appeal for those who want to move upward economically by business and trade. "Pentecostalist churches," says Meyer, "offer them a new individualist ethics which matches their aspirations to achieve power and esteem irrespective of age and origin."[542] Meyer's study of the diabolisation of the Ewe cosmology in Ghana also highlights how the NMG missionaries demonstrated their commitment to modernity by their establishing of

[542] Meyer, *Make a Complete Break,* 320.

Christian villages with school, church, small houses for nuclear families and the propagation of cash crops.[543] According to Meyer, the appeal of Christianity for many of the Ewe was material possessions and the qualifications achievable in mission schools; "Indeed Christianity offered a way out of existing constraints and promised upward social mobility."[544] These very material reasons for conversion inevitably frustrated the NMG missionaries but, as Meyer points out, religion for the Ewe could not conceivably be "reduced to a state of mind, but was closely connected to everyday life."[545]

If we consider the wider context of Southeast Asia, Barbara Andaya highlights how people in this region eagerly selected and adapted overseas influences long before their region's engagement with European and American culture. According to Andaya, there was little purchase among Southeast Asians for the concept of national self-sufficiency and, "foreign religions like Christianity were only rarely perceived as a threat to the social order."[546] With an observation that resonates with this thesis, Andaya points out that being modern in Southeast Asia was, "manifested in a selective localization that involves the combination of imported elements with indigenous ones."[547] The use of modern objects from outside often took on a localised character. Thus a magnifying glass was recognised as helpful to someone with failing eyesight but also as a powerful object that helped one to "foresee the future."[548]

Cornelia Kammerer has described how conversion to Christianity among the Akha highlanders of Burma and Thailand gained intensity at the same time as traditional religious knowledge among these people began to wane. The diminishing

[543] Meyer, *Translating the Devil,* 8.
[544] Ibid, 96.
[545] Ibid, 13.
[546] Barbara Watson Andaya, "Historicizing 'Modernity' in Southeast Asia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40, no. 4 (1997).
[547] Ibid, 397.
[548] Ibid, 399.

importance of local knowledge was a ramification of young Akha becoming ever more preoccupied with gaining an education in the Thai school system in the understanding that this, in turn, could lead to new economic opportunities.[549] But why Christianity and not Thai Buddhism? According to Kammerer, choosing Christianity rather than Buddhism is not uncommon among Southeast Asian mountain minorities and is explained as being a claim to difference from, as well as a claim to equality with, valley-dwelling Buddhists. Christianity offers a way to continue to be different from the dominant Buddhist majority while retaining some semblance of Akha-ness.[550]

This observation by Kammerer, writing in 1990, is validated by James C. Scott whose major study, already referred to in chapter three, was published in 2009. Scott confirms that it is common for hill peoples in Southeast Asia to adopt a religious identity that is at variance with that of core state populations who have stigmatised them.[551] For Scott, Christianity is a resource that helps highland peoples create a modern identity and provides opportunity for group formation and social mobility. In terms of a modern identity the presence of Christianity promised literacy, education, modern medicine and material prosperity. In terms of group formation, Christianity helps create "a place for new elites," and "an institutional grid for social mobilization," all the time allowing hill people to maintain the hill-valley distinction and avoid incorporation into a state-forming society.[552]

All of this helps us understand that it is not unusual for the Bible, and Protestant Christianity in general, to be appropriated in response to the need for a new identity and the desire for social mobility. In chapter one, this author stated that sociopolitical factors, as well as cultural, have shaped the Manobo's distinctive

[549] Cornelia Ann Kammerer, "Conversion among the Akha Highlanders of Burma and Thailand," *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 2 (1990): 284.
[550] Ibid, 285
[551] Scott, *The Art of not being Governed,* 319.
[552] Ibid, 320

interpretation of biblical authority (chapter one, page 8). The sociopolitical factors are the "massive social and environmental upheaval" endured by the *Lumad* communities of Mindanao during the years of the Marcos presidency in the Philippines (chapter two, pages 61ff). The Manobo featured in this thesis, concentrated mainly in the provinces of Bukidnon and Davao del Norte, experienced the full force of this turmoil. Hawley writes that the stress inherent in a period of change can lead to the search for a new identity and that, in the case of the Miskitu, led them to choose Christianity.[553] It is reasonable to conclude that the seismic changes underwent by the Manobo in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s helped trigger the quest for a new identity that would allow them to benefit from the entry of new technology and education but at the same time avoid complete assimilation into Visayan culture. The Manobo of this survey population first encountered the Bible and Protestant Christianity in the mid-1970s when the monumental changes listed above were in full swing. Christianity, and in particular the Bible, provided a new text that allowed some Manobo to negotiate a way through their new circumstances, to their advantage.

Meyer writes of the Ewe in Ghana that "the will to convert indicates that people were in one way or another dissatisfied with the state of things and wanted to improve their situation."[554] Indeed the appropriation of a new religion, or elements thereof at a time of crisis, is frequently given momentum by the perceived inadequacy of the old gods in dealing with new conditions.[555] This is borne out by some variables within the statistics given above. Of those who view the Bible as a signifier of modernity, 59% (17/29) were thirty-six years of age and over. Six of the eight interviewees within the survey population aged fifty-five and above spoke

[553] Hawley, *Does God Speak Miskitu,* 327-28.
[554] Meyer, *Translating the Devil,* 96.
[555] Cf. Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 131. Walls makes the point that the universal faiths can provide the means for maintaining the identity of tribal people under the threat of absorption or domination from a majority culture.

about the significance of the Bible in these terms. A large majority of those who affirm the connection between the Bible and modernity are also those who have benefited the least from formal education. Some 83% (24/29) had received no formal education or only elementary education. The remaining 17% (5/29) had experienced college and/or high school education.

Older MABCAM members experienced first-hand the cultural convulsions of the 1960s–1980s. Their conclusion that traditional sources of authority were appropriate 'back then' but that the Bible is for 'now' fits with the perception that the former is inadequate for the new context. Moreover, their lack of opportunity for participation in the formal education process in their pre-Christian past is likely to have only sharpened their awareness of how vital it is for the "modern era." This awareness would have served to reinforce their conviction that the traditional religious complex, which was suspicious at best of the state school system (see quote above from interview 63, page 191), was ill-equipped to help them navigate a new cultural landscape where education was a vital ingredient. Christianity, however, with a book at the centre of its praxis was adjudged more amenable to the modern phenomena of education and technology.[556]

The Bible—A very material power

Matthew Engelke has written on the reception of Christianity by a group called the Friday Masowe apostolics who live and practise Christianity in Zimbabwe but do not read the Bible. A primary reason for this is that the Bible is an object, and as such, "it does not inspire them." According to the apostolics, texts deaden faith by taking

[556] Christianity's connection with education was fixed early in MABCAM members' perceptions. A scholarship programme was created by OMF soon after the formation of MABCAM in 1985 which has facilitated many Manobo youth being able to gain an education at high school and college level. By 2012, 140 MABCAM students had graduated with a tertiary level qualification. Cf. Irene McMahon, "A Critique of the Scholarship Programme Created by Overseas Missionary Fellowship in Partnership with the Indigenous Manobo People in Central Mindanao" (MA Thesis, University of Gloucestershire, 2012), 6.

out the spirit. They are in effect, "physical obstacles" to God's presence.[557] The Bible's materiality issued in its rejection by the Friday apostolics, an extreme example perhaps of how engagement produced a response unexpected by missionaries or more established African Christianities. On the other hand, writing on the encounter with the Bible of the Biak people of Indonesia, Danilyn Rutherford states that the Bible was considered potent because it was foreign and alien. It was something which "made present the potency of alien lands." [558] It became valued as a fetish, a magical possession, something with a very material power. It is this reading of the Bible's materiality, i.e. as an object of power, manifested among MABCAM members, that concerns us in the final section of this chapter.

Before we consider the data, it needs to be said that this author often had to probe informants with follow-up questions in order to secure information on the materiality of the Bible's power. This was necessary for two reasons. Firstly, the author was aware that the Bible was being used in this way by some MABCAM members, but that the practice would normally happen in homes or other more private venues; it was not something that would normally be observable through participant observation. Secondly, it is possible that some of those interviewed were reluctant to volunteer information on this subject, perhaps judging their own use of the Bible in this way as a practice the author might disapprove of. In fact, one participant did admit that drawing on the material power of the Bible was something he had been criticised for in the past: "Some people have told me this is a form of idolatry." (Interview 12).

Data from the interviews suggests that the authority of Scripture as material power is exhibited in a couple of ways. Firstly, 48% of interviewees (29/61) have made use of or affirm the Bible being used as a talisman. The precise ways in which it is made

[557] Matthew Engelke, *A Problem of Presence: Beyond Scripture in an African Church* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 7.
[558] Rutherford, *The Bible meets the idol,* 260.

to function as talisman can be made clear in the following selection of quotations from interviewees:

> "There was an inter-church gathering in the village one week with early morning prayer meetings. One morning it was held here and that morning there was a young man in the congregation who had an evil spirit and was rolling around on the floor going crazy; people praying for him and holding their Bibles up and facing him. Eventually he went weak and then slept." (Interview 08)

> "Yes, especially if someone is sick, they can put the Bible on their heads and pray. I did that with my grandchild and the fever went away. My husband wanted to kill a chicken at that time but I told him it would be better if he sold the chicken and just bought some rice." (Interview 09)

> "My child once had meningitis. We went to the clinic and they advised us to go to the regional [hospital]. I really prayed fervently for my daughter in the hospital and I also took the Bible and placed it beside her on the bed. So I have experience that the Bible is really effective with the sick." (Interview 21)

> "The Bible, I keep it there in my house but when it is night I sleep beside it because it is my guardian and so nothing evil can enter my house like *busao*. It is my sharp weapon. So for this reason I am not afraid to sleep in the house because I have a companion. The Lord sleeps with me." (Interview 35)

> "Also if I am away harvesting sugar cane, I carry my Bible with me because when we sleep I place it on my pillow. Sometimes in the sugar fields there are lots of *wakwak* (aswang) that pass by." (Interview 79)

This sample of quotations demonstrates the Bible being used to heal from sickness and to effect deliverance from affliction by evil spirits. It is also used prophylactically to prevent evil spirits from coming near people and causing harm. This phenomenon has its roots in traditional Filipino religiosity and more precisely in the *anting anting* phenomenon, already discussed in chapter three (chapter three, pages 98 ff). The *anting anting* is an amulet, used to provide protection from malign spirits such as *busao* and from the danger posed by *aswang* and sorcerers.[559] It also has power to cure a wide range of illnesses. Of particular interest for this chapter is that text can be employed as *anting anting*. Small books containing Latin prayers

[559] See the reference to *busao* and *aswang* (*wakwak*) in interviews 35 & 79 above.

known as *orasyun* can be recited in order to actuate their protective power. The *libritos* can also afford protection by being carried on one's person or placed in one's home without the need for recitation. The Bible, as text, is clearly being used by a considerable number of Manobo Christians within MABCAM as a powerful *anting anting*.[560]

Secondly, 23% of interviewees (14/61) described how the spiritual power of the Bible can be appropriated simply by reading it:

> "His word can give comfort and rest to those who are really tired . . . I have got help from the Bible when I have had problems. I just read where it opened and I felt release from my problems." (Interview 10)
>
> "If I have a problem, and then read the Bible, the problem goes away and life becomes smooth again . . . When you read the Bible the spirit comes and brings comfort." (Interview 19)
>
> "Here in this Bible are all the words of God which can put our breath right." (Interview 35)

For these respondents the Bible has healing and restorative potential for damaged emotions. Interviewee 35 above declared faith in the Bible to put his/her *goinawa* (breath) right. In chapter two we reflected on the *goinawa* as metaphor for the seat of a person's feelings and that the state of an individual's *goinawa* is dependent on proper relationships of respect with other Manobo (chapter three, page 102). This restorative power of the Bible can be accessed by reading anywhere within the

[560] Ole Jakob Løland's study on the place of the Bible within a neo-Pentecostal church in Brazil, the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (IURD) reveals the Bible being put to similar use in that context. Løland claims the Bible has been "informally marginalised" by the IURD when compared with the position it occupied within classical Pentecostalism in Brazil. Cf. Ole Jakob Løland, "The Position of the Biblical Canon in Brazil," in *Studies in World Christianity* 21, 2 (2015): 101. There is no obligatory reading of Scripture during an IURD worship service and a sermon can be given without the use of a biblical text, Ibid, 112. "The Bible," according to Løland, "is present in the form of staged allusions and retold stories, in addition to being a physical object that the pastor carries or uses to expel demons. The bible has power, miraculous power, but it is not the only object with such a power." Ibid, 113. It needs to be said however, that though Manobo Christians believe in the Bible's miraculous properties they remain avid readers and students of the same, as will become apparent in the following chapter.

biblical text. It is not necessary to read passages where one's own particular crisis or source of pain is directly addressed. This is corroborated by the variable of Bible reading method. Nine of the fourteen interviewees who affirmed the Bible's power to heal damaged emotions preferred to read the Bible in a non-consecutive fashion, that is, they simply open the Bible at random and read. Only one of the fourteen confessed to reading Bible passages consecutively.

William Graham refers to this as the sensual element of Scripture, how contact with Scripture can,

> ". . . elicit in the reader, hearer, onlooker or worshiper diverse responses: a surge of joy or sorrow; a feeling of belonging or even of alienation; a sense of guidance or consolation (or the want of either); or a feeling of intimacy with awesome distance from the divine."[561]

Graham is dealing with the orality of textual tradition and insists that this dimension of a text is often stronger than is usually recognised.[562] Text always had the potential to provide an encounter with transcendence for people, but now, according to Graham, because of the casual familiarity people have with books, the special quality of the physical text as an object of reverent devotion in and of itself can be greatly reduced.[563] For Manobo Christians within MABCAM there remains a degree of dynamism in their relationship with the Scriptures. In fact if we combine those who affirmed the use of the Bible as talisman with those who experienced it as a source of power for emotional healing, then we have a percentage figure of 59% (36/61) who relate to the Bible as an object of power.

Conclusion

In summarising this final section we can trace a response to biblical authority that resembles what we have already noted among the Zulu members of the Nazaretha

[561] William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 6-7.
[562] Ibid, 5.
[563] Ibid, 46.

church in South Africa, the Lisu and Karen Christians of highland Southeast Asia and, similar also to the response of Tagalog peasants in central Luzon to the textual authority of a passion narrative. None of these were passive recipients of Christian text and the norms for handling these texts were not assiduously followed. Manobo Christians within MABCAM have, likewise, not adopted without change the evangelical concept of biblical authority. Missionaries introduced a Bible deemed authoritative because it self-declared as being divinely inspired. If inspired by God, and God does not lie, then it was to be considered without error. Earlier in this chapter we noted this as a deductive argument, logical and rational. It is a rationale that emerged from the fundamentalist/modernist debates in the early decades of the twentieth century and developed as part of a wider apologetic to defend Christian values against erosion by modernist/liberal values (see above, page 161ff). For missionaries evangelising the Manobo, a Bible with divine authority validated the gospel message they were communicating. The logical corollary to having an authoritative Bible was to study it, believe the message predicated upon it and to live in obedience to its precepts. This is how the transformative quality of the Bible would be realised.

MABCAM Christians have not rejected this evangelical doctrine, but rather have modified what is a very abstract and rationalistic notion of biblical authority. This process began with the missionaries' "soft" mediation of the western evangelical form of the doctrine; Manobo Christians have taken the procedure to another level. Barbara Andaya's remarks on the history of modernisation within Southeast Asia and how imported elements were combined with indigenous ones (see above, page 192), have force within the Manobo context. The indigenous cosmology of the Manobo, especially their very material concept of power, that it is something substantive, not abstract, has reshaped the evangelical contours of what it means

for the Bible to be a source of spiritual authority. As Rutherford said of Biak Christians in Indonesia; for them "God's kingdom is decidedly of this world".[564]

Manobo Christians' expansion of the meaning of biblical authority suggest that the indigenous cosmology, which had been stigmatised by missionaries, PC pastors and evangelists, has sufficient resilience to resist attempts to exclude its influence in determining the place and function of the Bible within indigenous Christian communities. In the following chapter we shall investigate how local cosmology and customary law has also shaped how Manobo interpret the text of Scripture.

[564] Rutherford, *The Bible meets the idol,* 254.

Chapter Six. Manobo Christians and Biblical Interpretation

> Qu. "What about those who place the Bible on the body of the sick person?"
>
> Ans. "That is not really of value if you do not open it and you are not concerned about what is inside. You need to read it." (Interview 30)

This interchange between the author and an interview participant is a reminder that though the concept of scriptural authority has experienced some innovations in the process of appropriation by Manobo Christians, reading and interpreting the Scriptures are nevertheless vital components of the Christian life for MABCAM members. This chapter focuses on interpretation and investigates how Manobo Christians' understanding of important elements of Christian faith has been shaped by their peculiarly "Manobo interaction" with the text. We shall see that indigenous sources of authority, namely Manobo *batasan* and the world of *diwata*, though ostensibly superseded by the Christian Scriptures, exert a compelling influence on how Manobo Christians read the Bible.

This chapter is composed of two sections. The first section is preoccupied with the 'missionary hermeneutic' and will focus on the biblical content of evangelism and Bible teaching on the part of OMF missionaries who did church planting among the Manobo of central Mindanao. This is essential if we wish to see clearly how the missionary handling of the Bible has shaped Manobo reading and interpretation and conversely, if we are to understand to what extent MABCAM members have resisted the missionary reading of Scripture and developed their own lines of interpretation. After providing a general theological outline of the missionary message, this section will deal with the primary tenets of the missionary gospel namely, "human sinfulness," the "death of Christ as substitutionary atonement", God as "sovereign, holy, and righteous" and the "anticipated response from Manobo believers." The section will then finish with an analysis of the missionary message predicated on historical-theological factors.

The second section of the chapter will examine the 'Manobo hermeneutic' and will involve a survey of Manobo Christians' Bible-reading preferences followed by a focus on three major themes which emerge from the data provided by interviewees on the one hand and by preachers and Sunday school teachers on the other. The three themes are the 'death of Christ', the 'character of God' and 'Christian lifestyle'. These three themes correspond for the most part with the tenets at the heart of the missionary message. This section will then finish with an analysis of the Manobo hermeneutic predicated on Manobo cosmology and customary law as outlined in chapter three.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand how "ordinary indigenous readers" of the Bible from Manobo communities read Christianity's central text.[565] In the introduction to this thesis we briefly considered attempts to define and articulate the ambitious notion of 'Asian biblical hermeneutics'. We noted that even within the discourse by proponents of the idea there were admissions that the vast geographical spread of the continent, and immeasurable diversity of its peoples meant the pursuit of a single Asian method of interpreting the Bible was an elusive goal. We also noted that the suggested forms of an Asian hermeneutic are the product, for the most part, of the thinking of theologians and biblical scholars from within the academy. Asia's people from the margins, in particular those from the continent's indigenous minority peoples, are largely a side-show to this enterprise (chapter one, page 2ff).

The Missionary Hermeneutic

In a personal letter to the author, Dave Ginther, a Canadian and former team leader to OMF workers serving among the Manobo, summarised the content of his use of the Bible in evangelism among the Tigwa Manobo. Referencing his own journal from the 1970s, Ginther listed a basic outline of eleven messages that were used to

[565] See chapter one, n. 1 for notes on term, "ordinary indigenous readers."

teach the gospel. The first four were from the Old Testament and featured creation and the fall of man, Satan and the origin of evil, the flood and God's judgement, the Ten Commandments. The remainder were from the New Testament and concerned with the life of Christ, his trial and crucifixion, his resurrection and ascension, the church, and finally Christ's return for judgement and to take his own. [566]

This outline from Ginther demonstrates an evangelical hermeneutic at work on the text of Scripture to produce a redemption-centric message. Humans are presented as created by God, yet fallen; a condition engendered by humankind's progenitors, Adam and Eve, who opted for Satan and against God in Eden – a calamitous event that explains both the origin of evil and the rebelliousness of all humanity against the will of God. The fall has left the human race unable to obey God's laws, distilled in the Ten Commandments, and so is in need of a saviour who, unlike the rest of humankind, is sinless and uniquely qualified to save, a mission which he fulfils through his self-giving in an atoning, sacrificial death. The efficacy of his death as an 'adequate' sacrifice is validated through his resurrection and ascension.

The proclamation of these events as salvific was what constituted the core of the gospel for these missionaries. The possibility of forgiveness of sins, freedom from the kingdom of darkness and the promise of eternal life was predicated on the exercise of saving faith by those who heard the message. Through faith and baptism believers become members of the church and live in obedience to Christ's word until he returns to judge the earth.

A similar theological schema appears in missionary G's report on a conversation he had with three Manobo men. He recounts the topics covered in conversation in list form as,

[566] David Ginther, in an email to the author, October 18, 2014.

> "Parents sinned, Adam, Eve; all of us are sinners, followed parents; only Jesus can *husoy* [*sic.*][567] his Father (we are enemies of God under wrath). Pigs and chickens cannot husoy [*sic.*] God; Jesus *husoyed* [*sic.*] his father by his death. Once for all death is enough forever, If we believe—he applies his blood to us and our sin is gone. His blood continues to cleanse us if we sin again."[568]

In chapter five, we noted OMF missionaries' introduction of the CBT approach to evangelism and teaching, as developed by Trevor McIlwain (chapter five, page 168). In his *Evangelism: The Old Testament,* McIlwain gives a brief summary of the doctrinal content running through the evangelistic section of the course.

> "The doctrinal themes running through Phase I are those which will show people they are sinful, condemned, and helpless before God, their holy and righteous Creator and Judge, as well as those which will generate faith and bring complete dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient saviour."[569]

McIlwain also summarises what he regards as themes needing emphasis on the topics of "Man," "Satan" and "Jesus Christ." "Man" is sinful and must have faith in order to please God and be saved. Satan and his angels are the enemies of God and man. They are deceitful and lying spirits, always opposed to the will of God. "Jesus Christ" is God, man, holy, righteous and the only saviour.[570]

Although the evangelistic phase of the CBT course comprised 68 lessons, with considerable space being made for the use of the Old Testament and a more thorough explanation of what McIlwain deems to be important Christian teaching, the course outline closely matches that of OMF pioneer missionary Ginther, referred to above. There is an almost exact correspondence of doctrinal themes concerning creation, Satan and his angels, the sinfulness of humankind, estrangement of the same from a holy God, God's gracious calling of Israel into covenant with himself, Israel's persistent rebellion and inability to keep God's laws

[567] The word *husoy* means to settle a situation of conflict between two parties.
[568] Missionary G, in article entitled "Talk with Kayluan", (March 1980).
[569] McIlwain, *Evangelism: The Old Testament,* 74.
[570]Ibid, 78-79.

because of their latent sinfulness, the gracious provision of a saviour in Jesus Christ, and faith as the means for receiving what is a very personal salvation.

Following the introduction of the CBT method, OMF missionaries' use of the Bible continued to reflect this distinctively evangelical interpretive framework of McIlwain and the pioneering members of OMF. Teaching materials produced for the training of MABCAM church leaders at the CMBSM[571] followed very closely the lesson outlines in McIlwain's published manuals. The equivalent "phase one," entitled "*Bahin Uno*," even has sixty-six lessons, only two less than the sixty-eight of McIlwain.[572]

Primary Tenets of the Missionary Message

Human Sinfulness

The sinfulness of humanity was a core tenet of the missionaries' preaching and a sense of "conviction of sin" was what they wanted to see manifested in the lives of individual Manobo they were teaching.

> "Let's pray in this new year . . . that there will be a genuine conviction of sin, repentance and faith in preparation for the son of God."[573]

> "So many old beliefs and sins have to still be repented of before the Word can be planted and grow properly."[574]

Missionary B, in an untitled article written in 1979, explained how he believed the Manobo legal system, and in particular the *datu*'s role as arbitrator in disputes between Manobo, could be used as a 'redemptive analogy' that would help communicate to Manobo the need for people to have God's case against them settled, because of their sin: "We know from God's Word that when we sin against

[571] Central Manobo Bible School of Mindanao.
[572] CMBSM, *Bahin Uno.* "Bahin Uno" means "part one" in the Cebuano language. Though the title is written in Cebuano the content of the manual was written in Manobo, as were the second and third manuals, entitled *Bahin Dos* and *Bahin Tres* respectively.
[573] Missionary F, Prayer Partner Letter, (February 1978).
[574] Ibid., (April 1979)

another person we also sin against Him, Rom. 3:23. You have settled your cases with others but what about your case with God, have you settled that? - - -Answer usually "no"."[575] Missionary H mentions a couple who were not admitted for baptism because at the interview prior to baptism day, when asked why they wanted to be baptised, responded, "Because we do not have any sins."[576] A new convert's self-awareness of his/her sin was deemed a prerequisite for baptism.

We have already noted above that significant space was given to human sinfulness within the doctrinal content of the CBT lessons designed by McIlwain, particularly in the 68 evangelistic lessons of phase one (see above page 206ff). At the beginning of lesson eleven, which introduces the disobedience of Adam and Eve into the story of salvation, an important doctrinal theme is declared to be, "Man is a sinner. He needs God and is helpless to save himself." In the fifty-eight remaining lessons of phase one, this same sentence appears in forty-seven (80%) of the lesson outlines, illustrating the weight credited to this particular doctrine within the theological scope of the lessons.[577]

The Manobo *Bahin Uno* at lesson nine introduces the sin of Adam and Eve and describes the consequences of their sin by translating McIlwain's doctrinal theme from the paragraph above into Manobo. The English transliteration reads as, "From the sin of Adam and Eve people became sinners. We cannot rescue our lives, only God can rescue us."[578] As in McIlwain's publication, this doctrinal tenet is repeated frequently throughout the remaining lessons of *Bahin Uno*.

[575] Missionary B, untitled article, (June 1979).
[576] Missionary H, Prayer Partner Letter, (April 1979)
[577] The phase one lessons were published in volumes two and three of *Building on Firm Foundations*. For volume two see chapter five, n. 484. For volume three, see Trevor McIlwain, *Evangelism: The Life of Christ*, 7 vols., vol. 3, Building on Firm Foundations (Sanford, Florida: New Tribes Mission, 1989).
[578] *Bahin Uno,* 49.

Christ's Death as Atoning Sacrifice

Concomitant with this emphasis on humanity's sinfulness was a commitment on the part of missionaries to teach the death of Christ as atonement for sin and the only solution to humanity's plight, engendered by its innate sinfulness. Missionary G, in an article entitled "Blood Sacrifice", describes how he had been trying to discover what the real "core" of Manobo life and culture was. The real core, he concluded was "blood,"

> ". . . because it alone can pay for the sin . . . This is exactly the Biblical teaching on propitiation . . . So it would seem that blood sacrifice as a substitution, a payment for sin, is a major factor in Manobo culture . . . Now Christ fits this core perfectly and of course in a superior way . . . The core of the Christian life and belief is Jesus, and the primary truth about him is his death for us."[579]

Missionary G's reflection on the use of animal sacrifices in rituals designed to restore the balance of relationships between humans and *diwata* (chapter three, page 90) helped lead him to this conclusion about blood being at the "core" of Manobo life and culture. He was also convinced that the centrality of sacrificial blood in Manobo ritual is analogous to the centrality of Christ's death for Christians, as propitiatory sacrifice; a correspondence which he believed could aid their communication of the superiority of Christ's sacrificial death over that of an animal.

A similar correspondence was made by another missionary: "There is substitution (in place of the sick person) and propitiation (blood to appease the offended spirit). Both concepts in the Bible are understood by Manobo but of course the distortions around them in Manobo beliefs must be cleared up."[580] Nevertheless, though missionaries could see conceptual links between the Manobo notion of propitiation and the death of Christ, they were in no doubt that the death of Christ as sacrifice was superior. One missionary, upon being asked why she and her companion had

[579] Missionary G, "Blood Sacrifice," (March 1980).
[580] "Some Basic Manobo Beliefs," 3. No author or date available.

left a ritual where a sacrifice was being made, stated, "That gave me an opportunity to say a little about Christ's once-for-all shed blood."[581]

As with the topic of human sinfulness above, Christ's death as atonement is also a priority topic within the CBT lessons designed by McIlwain and subsequently in the training manuals designed by OMF missionaries. In the early section of phase one at lesson eight, the ground is prepared for the eventual presentation of the death of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice. God's warning to Adam, that punishment by death would fall upon anyone who ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, is flagged up as illustrating the doctrinal theme that, "God is holy and righteous. He demands death as the payment for sin."[582] Following its introduction at this juncture, this theme subsequently appears in the lesson outline of twenty-six (42%) of the remaining chapters of phase one. In lesson thirty-four, which introduces the building of the tabernacle and the regulations governing the sacrificial system, McIlwain, in a word of explanation to teachers says,

> "We are teaching here the doctrine of atonement. During the Old Testament, the sinner was fully forgiven . . . only because He [God] intended to deal with that sin righteously and completely through the sacrificial blood and death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross."[583]

Jesus' death, is interpreted almost exclusively in the final lessons in phase one as an atoning sacrifice for sin, which satisfies the righteous demands of a holy God.[584]

The same prominence is given to the theme of Jesus' death as atonement for sin in *Bahin Uno*. The doctrinal theme concerning "God's righteousness" and "death as payment for sin" also makes its first appearance in chapter nine and is thereafter repeated several times. The English transliteration reads, "God is good and

[581] Missionary D, Prayer Partner Letter, August 1978.
[582] McIlwain, *Evangelism: The Old Testament,* 168.
[583] Ibid, 371.
[584] McIlwain, *Evangelism: The Life of Christ,* 137-158.

righteous; he punishes sin; death is the punishment for sin."[585] In lesson sixty-five of *Bahin Uno*, Jesus' death is interpreted, as in McIlwain's lessons, as atonement for sin: "Because God is good and righteous, he can only forgive sin if there is an adequate payment for sin . . . from the beginning death has been the punishment for sin . . . Jesus can only rescue us if he suffers in our place, the punishment for sin. . . ."[586]

God as Sovereign, Holy and Righteous

The OMF archived material relating to the mission's presence among the Manobo, and in particular missionary prayer partner letters, reveal only occasional traces of the character of God presented to the Manobo by pioneering missionaries during the first ten years of evangelism. There are occasional references to God as creator, as when missionary A wrote that he had, "shared how God made all things in the beginning…"[587] Missionaries' bewilderment with the extreme pluralism of the world of *diwata* meant that effort was perhaps also more focused on teaching the singularity of the Godhead than anything else. One writer demonstrates this concern:

> "Because Manobo see the spirit world as many gods, angels, spirits and many can be called on to assist in various areas of life we need to focus in our initial ministry on the fact there is one true God and he alone is to be prayed to for all things in all areas, and we don't come to him through other spirits."[588]

By adopting the CBT method, and using McIlwain's *Building on Firm Foundations* as a framework for evangelism and training church leaders, more deliberate attention was given to teaching on the character of God. McIlwain states that the Old Testament reveals God as "man's sovereign, holy, loving, righteous, merciful, and

[585] *Bahin Uno*, 49.
[586] Ibid, 371.
[587] Missionary A, Prayer Partner Letter, (October 1975).
[588] "Some Basic Manobo Beliefs," 3.

immutable Creator, Lawgiver, Judge and Saviour."[589] God is subsequently described using these modifiers in the lesson outlines of phase one. God as "omnipresent and omniscient" appears thirty-nine times; God as "faithful and immutable" thirty-seven times; God as "loving, merciful and gracious" thirty-five times; God as "supreme and sovereign" thirty-four times; God as omnipotent twenty-five times. When it comes to lesson outlines where Jesus Christ is the central figure, the doctrinal themes given priority are: Jesus Christ is God, twenty-two times; Jesus Christ is the only saviour, thirteen times; Jesus is holy and righteous, six times; Jesus Christ is man, five times.

The degree of importance attributed to these "incommunicable" qualities within the Godhead is again faithfully repeated within the *Bahin Uno*. God is described in chapter one as being "more powerful than anything else."[590] In chapter two he is "the authority over everything," and that, "wherever we go, God is already there."[591] The latter is a clear attempt to translate the doctrine that "God is omnipresent." In chapter three he is introduced as one who "knows everything and one from whom no one can hide."[592] Once again these themes are frequently reasserted in the remaining lessons of the *Bahin Uno* training manual.

The anticipated response

Missionaries expected a conviction of sin as the first step in a Manobo's response to the teaching of the gospel (see above, page 207). Conviction of sin was then expected to lead to the next step, defined using terms like faith, repentance, baptism and regular involvement in a local church. The two concepts of "faith" and "repentance" have traditionally been considered two sides of the same coin in terms of what evangelical Christians expect as a response from gospel preaching.

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[589] Trevor McIlwain, *Guidelines for Evangelism and Teaching Believers*, 7 vols., vol. 1, Building on Firm Foundations (Sanford, Florida: New Tribes Mission, 1987), 85.
[590] *Bahin Uno, 1.*
[591] Ibid, 5.
[592] Ibid, 11.

"Faith" is considered as the positive action involved in the process of conversion. It is signified by a "decision" for Christ; sometimes phrased as "trusting" in Christ, or "embracing" Christ. The following quotations from OMF missionary prayer letters illustrate this understanding of what was expected in terms of a response to the missionary message:

> "Please pray as I try to share with him concerning the only way to have victory over sin. Pray that he will believe and turn to Christ for salvation."[593]

> "Our hope was now to begin a series of meetings with all the villagers present where we could tell them the "Good News" and ask them as a group to make a decision regarding it."[594]

> "Pray for the believers listed above and the ones showing interest that they will clearly and totally . . . embrace Christ and all his commands."[595]

Repentance, meanwhile, is considered as that which must be rejected, spurned, left behind by the convert who has trusted Christ for salvation. For the most part the pioneering missionaries focused on the need to leave behind all dealings with the world of spirits.

> "Even though one or two say they believe, there are still practices which need to be dealt with—drunkenness and sacrificing to the spirits are the two main ones."[596]

> "His expression was one of dullness toward the things of God. He has been involved in various spirit activities so he must be "counting the cost" and realizes that he does not want to part with his familiar spirit."[597]

Other expectations from missionaries were that new believers would be baptised, help form and become part of a local church and be involved in evangelism to other Manobo.

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[593] Missionary B, Prayer Partner Letter, July 1978.
[594] Ibid, September 1978.
[595] Missionary G, Prayer Partner Letter, 1979.
[596] Missionary D, Prayer Partner Letter, October 1977.
[597] Missionary B, Prayer Partner Letter, June 1983.

> "Our goal is still to see functional local churches started in these places. So far we have seen some interested people in various places, but no church."[598]
>
> "As the people gather for weekly meetings they talk more and more about the day of decision, about baptism and building a church."[599]
>
> "Our goal is to start evangelical churches with Manobo worshipping God in their own mother tongue and telling other Manobo the Good News of Jesus Christ."[600]

In the lesson outlines of phase one devised by McIlwain, a clear stress on the importance of 'faith' as a response to the message appears in thirty-seven of the sixty-eight lesson outlines (54%). As a doctrinal theme it is phrased as, "Man must have faith in order to please God." In the story of Nicodemus and his conversation with Jesus, faith is explained as necessary if one is to be "born again." This is explained as, "Only those who hear, receive, and truly believe God's word will be born again."[601] In the calling of Levi (Mark 2:13-14), his faith is explained thus: "Matthew changed his mind about himself, his sin and God's Word. He agreed with God. He trusted in Jesus as the Saviour whom God had sent into the world."[602]

Within the pages of *Bahin Uno,* the same principle of "faith" is reiterated, following the guidelines of McIlwain's lessons. Faith as a doctrinal theme in Manobo retranslates into English as "It is only possible to please God if we believe."[603]

In summary, missionaries expected a response from the Manobo that corresponded to the accents within their own message namely, an awareness of sin that translated into faith in Christ as the only source of salvation from the power of sin and Satan.

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[598] Missionary F, Prayer Partner Letter, November 1978.
[599] Missionary B, Prayer Partner Letter, October 1978.
[600] Ibid, January 1978.
[601] McIlwain, *Evangelism: The Life of Christ,* 48.
[602] Ibid, 56.
[603] *Bahin Uno,* 104.

Understanding the Missionary Message

The three primary tenets of the missionary message examined above are essential, interrelated elements that provide coherence to a particular conservative evangelical theology, an outline of which we have already briefly considered above (see above, page 204ff). It will suffice at this stage to briefly augment this with some comments which add flesh to that outline and help us understand its importance for evangelical missionaries.

The weight given to metaphysical categories within the CBT lessons, such as God's sovereignty, omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence is explained by McIlwain as important to counter what he describes as the "animist" impression of God, "as a mere distant, silent observer to world events and their own personal lives . . . He must be seen as He really is, their almighty Creator and sovereign Judge to whom they will give account for all they do and say."[604]

If God is the judge to whom people must give account, then his moral qualities as "holy and righteous" and humanity's condition as inherently "sinful," explain why judgement is inevitable. "God will not overlook sin," writes McIlwain, "All sin must be paid for."[605] It is this stark theological reality, the need for God's justice to be satisfied, that makes the death of Jesus Christ as a substitutionary sacrifice satisfying the justice of God, so essential to the evangelical message of salvation: "What is the punishment for sin? Death . . . Therefore the only way Jesus could deliver us was for Him to take our place before God and be punished for our sins."[606]

This interpretation of the death of Christ, usually referred to as "substitutionary atonement," was a doctrine resolutely defended by fundamentalists and

[604] McIlwain, *Evangelism: The Old Testament,* 75.
[605] Ibid, 76.
[606] *Evangelism: The Life of Christ*, 148.

evangelicals in the United States and the United Kingdom during the twentieth century. Within the early decades of the century in the US, the defence was provoked by the perceived threat posed by higher criticism and the liberal/modern vision of culture.[607] Its importance as a doctrine is signified by the space given to defending it within *The Fundamentals,* twelve booklets published in the United States between 1910 and 1915 which became foundational texts for the subsequent fundamentalist movement.[608] The defence of this doctrine also occupied the minds of evangelical scholars within the UK during the same period.[609]

In the years after World War II, the doctrine continued to be defended by evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic. In the UK it is considered by Alister Chapman as one of three core issues in the debates on fundamentalism that took place in the 1950s.[610] The same scenario was played out in the United States, and when the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) was formed in 1942, the organisation's statement of faith included a commitment to the doctrine, stating: "We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . in His vicarious and atoning death through his shed blood . . . ."[611]

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[607] Gary Dorrien, Reinhold Niebhur Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and a self-declared liberal theologian, writes candidly that nineteenth century liberal theologians in America rejected the doctrines of "double predestination, substitutionary atonement and biblical inerrancy." Gary Dorrien, "The Crisis and Necessity of Liberal Theology," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 30, no. 1 (2009): 3-4.

[608] Geoffrey Treloar, "The British Contribution to *the Fundamentals*, in Bebbington and Jones, *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism*.

[609] Two important works on the atonement in the UK published in the first decade of the Twentieth century were: James Denney, *The Death of Christ* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902). P. T. Forsyth, *The Cruciality of the Cross* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910).

[610] Alister Chapman, "Evangelical or Fundamentalist? The Case of John Stott," in Bebbington and Jones, *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism*, 197. A defence of the doctrine of "penal substitution" was drawn from John Stott in 1955 because of public criticism of the doctrine following Billy Graham's ministry in the UK in 1955; cf. John R. W. Stott, "Fundamentalism and Evangelism," (London: Crusade Booklets, 1956).

[611] James DeForest Murch, *Cooperation without Compromise: A History of the National Association of Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956), 65-66. The NAE was formed as an organisation promoting biblical orthodoxy but one that was less separatist and belligerent than the more

It was this commitment to the doctrine within the fundamentalist stream of church life in America, and in particular the Bible School movement, that is of significance for this thesis. In chapter five we noted the importance of this movement for maintaining fidelity to the doctrines of biblical inerrancy and verbal inspiration (chapter five, page 160ff). Equally, it was this movement's loyalty to substitutionary atonement which allowed the latter to become a vital component of the gospel message of western Protestant missionaries and, in turn, facilitated its encounter with the religious consciousness of the Manobo and other indigenous peoples around the world.

The Missionary Message in Context

In closing this section it is important to place pioneering evangelism among the Manobo of central Mindanao within the context of evangelicalism in the Philippines. The more conservative evangelical mission agencies that arrived in the Philippines in the decades following World War II formed the PCFEC in 1964 (chapter five, page 163). In its statement of faith the PCFEC declared its fidelity to Jesus Christ's "substitutionary and propitiatory death," the "total depravity of man because of the fall," and "salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ apart from works,"[612] all three of which are articles of faith common to the OMF pioneering missionaries and to their successors who embraced the CBT method of teaching and evangelism. The formation of the PCFEC/PCEC happened in large part as a response to the formation of the NCCP in 1963, an alliance of Protestant churches considered too liberal by most of the post-war agencies and churches (chapter two, page 64). In effect, the fundamentalist/liberal clash that first surfaced in the United States was

fundamentalist American Council of Christian Churches; cf. Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism,* 29-30.

[612] Aragon, *The Philippine Council,* 373-74. This statement of faith, adopted in 1965, remained unchanged after the change of name in 1968, and remains as the statement of faith for PCEC today.

being played out in the Philippines in the 1960s, within almost identical theological parameters.

Another historical factor that helps explain how the Bible was used by missionaries to the Manobo is the influence of the Church Growth Movement within Philippine evangelicalism and the adoption of DAWN 2000 by PCEC in 1981 (chapter one, n. 40), a decision in which OMF was involved from the beginning.[613] The adoption of DAWN resulted in phenomenal levels of growth among evangelical churches in the Philippines from the mid-1970s until 2000.[614] With so much energy focused on church planting it is perhaps inevitable that the Bible was used to communicate a message that would expedite conversions while promoting a very personal, individualistic notion of salvation. Writing on his vision for the discipling of the Philippine nation, Jim Montgomery states that what is "clearly" taught in the New Testament is that "a) God has a plan of salvation for all mankind . . . b) Repentance and belief on the Son . . . is an essential condition of receiving salvation . . . c) God commands that this plan of salvation be proclaimed to all men, and d) God desires all ethnic units to be disciples . . .".[615]

In summing up, it was within this wider context of evangelicalism in the Philippines where the Bible was being used for evangelism that OMF missionaries were engaged in church planting among the Manobo. The examination of data collected by this author suggests that their use of the Bible corresponds with how it was being used in evangelism and church planting by other evangelical bodies within the wider context of the nation. Even with the introduction of the CBT, the Bible was still being used by missionaries to the Manobo toward the same ends, namely, to

[613] Cf. Montgomery and McGavran, *The Discipling,* 53.
[614] Evangelical churches in the Philippines grew from an estimated 5.100 in 1975 to 38,086 in 2000. Cf. Jun Balayo, "Historical Overview of the Dawn 2000 Movement," 3.Unpublished paper. See also DAWN PHILIPPINES, *A Report,* 21.
[615] Montgomery & McGavran, *The Discipling,* 21.

bring individual Manobo to repentance and faith in Christ, that they might receive salvation.

The Manobo Hermeneutic

Our purpose in this half of the chapter is to ascertain to what extent there is continuity in Manobo reading of Scripture with the missionary hermeneutic and to what extent their encounter with the text has produced alternative or more nuanced perspectives on the death of Christ, the character of God and Christian ethics. We will look for answers to this conundrum by examining the data from interviews and spoken messages. However, before launching into these themes we will briefly map which sectors of the Bible MABCAM members tend to gravitate towards in their reading. This will help provide an embryonic outline of a Manobo interpretive matrix.

Surveying Manobo Bible Reading

In chapter five we noted that a sizeable percentage of MABCAM members, while enthusiastically crediting the Bible with an authority superior to that of customary law and the spirit world, had also modified the traditional evangelical doctrine of biblical authority. Notwithstanding these innovations on the part of Manobo Christians it is imperative to avoid creating a disjunction around Manobo Christians' evaluation of biblical authority. We must not assume that those who have adopted indigenous categories in their effort to understand this doctrine do not therefore read the Bible for meaning and do not allow it to affect their behaviour. An analysis of the data from interviewees and speakers presents us with a vibrant, dynamic, Bible reading community within MABCAM.

If we examine the data from interviewees we gain an understanding of the vitality of this reading community from the volume of Scripture references that were integrated into answers. Forty-two of the sixty-one interviewees (69%) quoted from Scripture at some point in their interview as an aid to explaining answers. In all,

eighty-five portions of Scripture were integrated into the interviews. The references were frequently recited very accurately, with chapter and verse included and an application. Some examples are as follows:

> "Loving each other is very important as Jesus taught in John 13:34. There he says, "If you love one another as I have loved you, people will see you and know that I have taught you this." But in our culture there was no free forgiveness. If you upset someone, they would only forgive you if you gave them a horse, or money or a carabao. If you tread on their rights they would get very upset." (Interview 08)

> "It says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, that if we are united with Christ we are new creatures, the old has gone the new has come. Because we are united to him, whatever was his character should be ours also. We should follow him also because we are united to him." (Interview 29)

Despite the absence of any reference to chapter and verse in some cases, the biblical source of several responses was nonetheless clear:

> "The Bible is like a mirror, and through it we can see what our lives look like." (A reference to James 1:22-25; interview 03)

> "We shouldn't yell at each other." (A reference to Ephesians 4:31; interview 04)

> "If you have an argument with someone, do not let the sun go down on it, ask for forgiveness." (A reference to Ephesians 4:26; interview 24)

If we turn to the use of Scripture by preachers, we have data from seven adult Sunday school messages and sixteen sermons.[616] Each speaker, whether church pastor or Sunday school teacher, selected his or her own Bible passage as a basis for teaching a Sunday morning message. In a similar fashion to the interviewees, the speakers frequently selected Bible verses outside of the passages from which they were teaching, and integrated these into their messages as supportive texts to their

[616] The distinction between these two did not affect the choice of Scripture or how these are used to construct a message for the congregation. For the functional difference between a Sunday school message and a sermon, see chapter four, page 119.

teaching. Nineteen of the twenty-three speakers used this technique and a total of sixty passages were referenced in this process.

One speaker quoted from James 2:17 while explaining Romans 12:8, where the exhortation is to use the gift of mercy:

> "If you have the gift of showing mercy to others then show it. Whoever you see in need, help them. It says in the Bible, in James, that faith is dead if there are no deeds. If you say you pity someone but do nothing then it is a lie. It is not true mercy. If you have mercy you need to do something." (Sermon 48)

Another, preaching on Philippians 4:5-7 and eager to assure his listeners that God is ready to give what we ask of him, drew support from Exodus:

> "There is nothing that we ask of the Lord that he will not give. The Lord is ready to fulfil what he has promised to his people. We read in Exodus 34:7, "I am ready to fulfil my promise to thousands of people, but I will punish the first, second, third and fourth generation, because of the sin of their ancestors." (Sermon 64)[617]

These examples reveal a considerable level of biblical literacy on the part of ordinary readers as well as those who teach the Scriptures within churches. It is not insignificant that such a high percentage of members, who did not know what they were going to be asked when interviewed, were nevertheless able to draw on portions of Scripture from memory to augment their responses. Additional probing of the choices made when quoting or teaching Scripture helps us to begin seeing the initial contours of a Manobo hermeneutic.

To begin with, the speakers overwhelmingly preferred to teach from the New Testament. Nineteen of the twenty-three messages were based on passages from the New Testament, but only four from the Old Testament. This preference for the New Testament is also reflected in the choice of supporting Bible verses inserted into their messages. Forty-six references were made to New Testament passages by speakers in contrast with twenty references from the Old Testament. Of the New

[617] This is an accurate quotation of this verse from the Cebuano translation, *Maayong Balita Biblia*.

Testament passages or verses quoted by speakers, nineteen were from the gospels, thirteen from Pauline epistles, six from First Peter, four from James, three from Hebrews and three from First John.

The data from interviews follows a similar pattern. Of the Scripture passages or verses referenced by interviewees in their answers, fifty-nine were from the New Testament and twenty-six from the Old Testament. If we isolate the New Testament quotations, thirty-one were from the gospels, fifteen from the Pauline epistles, nine from the letter of James and one each from the books of Acts, Hebrews, First Peter and Revelation.

This allows us to make some tentative suggestions about Manobo hermeneutics. Firstly, this greater familiarity on the part of ordinary readers and Bible teachers with the New Testament than with the Old, and a special predilection for the gospels, suggests that the life and teachings of Jesus Christ are of prime importance for MABCAM members. This indicates that the theological framework used by OMF missionaries, and the importance attached to the entire story of redemption chronicled in both Old and New Testaments, has not been seamlessly appropriated by MABCAM members and leadership. This supposition is strengthened by the observable absence of any preacher or Sunday school teacher who taught what might resemble a CBT lesson.

Secondly, the data on passages preferred by speakers reveals a preference for a particular genre of passage. Didactic sections of Scripture, characterised by specific instructions on ethics, lifestyle and character were favoured over the more abstract, dialectical passages that characterise some segments of the Pauline epistles. Manobos' attraction to these passages allows us to posit the possibility that the Bible for the Manobo is of primary importance as a text that can shape lifestyle and character. This is partly confirmed by a breakdown in the figures relating to the choice of New Testament passages. The letter of James was selected by five of the

speakers, almost one fifth of those recorded; a letter with a reputation for practical Christianity.[618] Four messages were taken from the gospels[619] and though eight were based on the Pauline epistles, close examination of these still reflects the Manobo speakers' preference for applied theology. The content of these eight focuses on the importance of fulfilling key Christian duties such as prayer and evangelism and on perfecting Christian lifestyle and character.[620] These two features of a Manobo interpretive framework will become more sharply defined as we examine the theological themes outlined at the beginning of this chapter.

The Death of Christ and the Humble God

Earlier in this chapter we established that the interpretation of Christ's death as substitutionary atonement was central to the teaching of the early, pioneering, OMF missionaries who arrived in the mid–1970s and for the CBT method, adopted by OMF workers in the late 1980s for use in evangelism and training right through until the early years of this century. Bearing this in mind, this section will examine how Manobo Christians interpret the death of Jesus Christ.

Beginning with the interviews, twenty of the interviewees (33%), make reference to Jesus Christ as someone who "died for sins" or "died for our sins."

> "He is loving; we know this because he died for us." (Interview 07)

[618] Messages 16, 17, 36, 47 & 73 were based on the letter of James. On the matter of James and practical Christianity the commentators are in general agreement. "Christianity for James and his community is not then a matter of participation in a charismatic movement . . . Primarily, it is a way of life before God, a moral code." Sophie Laws, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1980), 33. "James is intensely practical; and believers looking for specific guidance in the Christian life naturally appreciate such an emphasis." Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 1.

[619] Messages 06, 32, 33 & 77 were based on the gospels.

[620] Messages 25, 29, 33, 48, 64, 75, 76, 78 were based on Pauline epistles. For a list of the passages from Pauline epistles used by Manobo speakers, and a summary of the content of each message, see appendix C. Only one speaker, speaker 29, deals with Pauline material that might be deemed as more "abstract."

> "He died without sin because of the people who were sinners, that is because of us." (Interview 12)
>
> "God is merciful and loving. You see, everyone was a sinner before and death was the payment. But God was merciful. He sent Jesus Christ in order to rescue people from sins if they draw near to him." (Interview 14)
>
> "The Lord is fair to all as far as who can be his child, because he died on the cross for all people. So when he went to the cross and his blood spilled out, he could have said "these are the only "people I am dying for." But we read in the Bible that he died for your sins. He is fair and does not choose one over another. All of us, Visayan or Manobo, all of us are loved by the Lord Jesus." (Interview 66)

If we consider the spoken messages, six speakers out of twenty-three (26%) made reference to Jesus dying for the sins of people.

> "Jesus, it was not his will that he die; because it was God's will that his son be sacrificed, and die for lots of people, he followed God's will. He died for everyone, that they be saved from their sins and given life everlasting through Jesus Christ who is our saviour." (Sermon 17)
>
> "Let's think about what God has done for us. He had himself crucified on the cross because of our sins. He gave himself completely for us." (Sunday school 36)

There would appear to be sufficient evidence in these quotations from interviews and messages to permit the conclusion that Christ's death as substitutionary atonement has become an established doctrinal tenet within Manobo Christianity, absorbed from years of missionary instruction and evangelism. Nevertheless, on closer examination the data does not allow of such a precise conclusion. It is not clear what each user of the expression, "died for us," "died for sins," "died for our sins" means when they use it. It can sound and read at times like an article of faith that has been learned though hymns or listening to sermons but seldom reflected upon. The expression is frequently used without explanation and when elaborated on by interviewee or speaker it is not clear that the individual is thinking of Jesus as a substitutionary sacrifice as he hangs on the cross. The following examples illustrate this point:

> "It is written in the New Testament that after the death of Jesus Christ, when he was crucified on the cross, the blood of Jesus that flowed; well that which was evil and filthy was washed through the blood of Jesus." (Interview 44)

> "The blood of Christ . . . means it covers over and cleans our sins. The blood of Christ is like . . . Chlorox.[621] All our sins can be removed, like paint remover . . . The blood of Christ is apparently like that." (Sermon 06)

> "It says here in Lev 5:6. "and he brings to the Lord a female lamb . . ." that was the way things were done in Israel . . . The truth now is that we go with Christ; we go ourselves before God, even if we do not have a lamb to offer. Your body, your heart is what you give to the Lord and say, Lord forgive me. That is what the Lord wants to see happen." (Sermon 26)

At best we can conclude there is a measure of ambiguity around references to Jesus' death as being "for sin." These latter references reflect an understanding on the part of some Manobo Christians that Jesus' death deals with sin because his blood somehow cleanses, or washes the sin away. The final quotation from sermon twenty-six suggests that forgiveness for sin is secured by the penitent offering their own self to God.

Jesus' death does, however, have alternative significance for MABCAM if we move beyond the categories of "substitutionary atonement" or "satisfaction for sin." His death, or more precisely the entirety of his passion, including his arrest and subsequent suffering of insults, beatings and his unjust trial have strong emotional meaning for many MABCAM members. This emerged from interviews when the author asked questions on what people believed the Bible taught regarding God's character. A considerable number of respondents used adjectives such as "humility," "patience," "gentleness" and "loving," enlarging on these by making reference to Jesus' passion and death:

> "Humility; No matter what they did to him, for many of them did not believe him, he did not retaliate. He forgave them. He was crucified, beaten by the rod which had thorns through it, but he never fought back. He prayed. He carried the cross. He didn't use harsh words with the people." (Interview 09)

[621] Chlorox is a brand name for bleach.

> "God is patient. I say this because he did not resist when he was being beaten. He was patient because he was paying for our sins. No matter what they did to him he did not oppose them. He suffered it." (Interview 40)

> "I would call that having a soft or kind heart that does not retaliate with the person who hurt him . . . when he was arrested and nailed, what did the people do? They spat on him and he was beaten by soldiers. That is what I mean by gentle character. He did that for us; he just ignored how much pain his body was suffering, because he said in the Bible, "Do not fear what happens to your body, but fear him who can kill your spirit."" (Interview 66)

References like these concerning Jesus' passion were recorded within twenty-five of the sixty-one interviews (41%) but only once within the twenty-three spoken messages. It is difficult to locate a reason for the discrepancy between the two categories of participants. Nevertheless, it is clear that among a large section of ordinary Manobo Bible readers, Jesus' death is something that has power to move them deeply and to affect changes in behaviour and development of character. This attitude towards the cross is a departure from the "normal" evangelical discourse on the significance of the crucifixion but is not untypical of the wider Philippines' context. We shall revisit the significance of this later in the chapter.

The God of Good *Batasan*[622]

> "The Lord has good *batasan*. He gave his life on the cross in order to pay for our sins. He is the one who saved people. We are protected by him; he keeps us far from evil people and evil spirits." (Interview 53)

The overwhelming majority of Manobo interviewees used words to describe God's character that signify a willingness to reach out in mercy to help, heal and restore. Fifty-two interviewees (85%) and seven speakers (30%) made reference to God using this kind of language. This overlaps with the previous section wherein the death of Christ was an action done out of love for people and in the carrying out of which he demonstrated additional qualities of patience, forgiveness, meekness and humility.

[622] See chapter three, pages 99-100 for discussion on the semantic range of the word *batasan.* It can mean "character" or "personality" as well as "customary law."

Of the fifty-two interviewees who refer to God in this way, thirty-five (67%) used the Cebuano word "*gugma"* meaning "love" or some cognate of this word, such as *mahigugmaon*, meaning "loving": "It is like this friends and brothers. The love of God is supremely great. Nothing can compare with the love of God. The love of God cannot be exchanged for gold. The love of God is so big that the world cannot contain the love of God." (Sermon 31)

Many of these explained his love by referring to the death of Christ as we noted in the previous section, but many also elaborated upon his love with a variety of other examples. "He loves people forever," said one, substantiating this with, "He likes to help those who are struggling in hard times." (Interview 11). "He has a big love for people. Even if a person is evil he will still show them great love. That's it!" (Interview 49)

For another, God's love is clear because he has no favourites: "Not like people who do have favourites. If our second child is good then we will favour it and praise it. Because it is good we make it our specially loved one. But God has no favourites. He is fair in his care for people." (Interview 36)

Generosity is another important quality of God. "He gives and is generous. He fed lots of people by asking his father for help." (Interview 43); "What you learn is that God is more wealthy than all the wealthy because he loves to give." (Interview 35); "He gave people food when they needed it." (Interview 09). Mercy and kindness also figure prominently with respondents:

> "Even if we sin, God still has pity on people and forgives them. He loves the person who is a sinner. So he really has good *batasan* toward us." (Interview 28)
>
> "He is kind with us in that if we have worries, we don't know when he will use another person to help solve our problem. Even though we are sinners he is still kind toward us." (Interview 37)

> "The Bible just says that he is loving and merciful. It does not say there that he scolds anyone or gets angry with them. No matter how great a person's sin is it does not say that he ever scolded. He is loving is what it says there." (Interview 72)

In contrast with the high percentage of participants who iterated the above character traits, there were seventeen interviewees (28%) who acknowledged that God could demonstrate anger. Often Scripture was quoted to confirm this:

> "If he is upset he can be really angry with people, like with the Israelites in the wilderness. He was angry with them because they complained so much. Then they were bitten by snakes." (Interview 10)

> "He could be angry when people did what he didn't like. Like when they sold things in the temple. He threw them out and chased the animals away. It was meant to be a place of worship but they made it into a market." (Interview 15)

It is also important to note that the attributes of God accented within the CBT and its theological undergirding were also found within the interviewees (12/61, 20%) and the spoken messages (4/23, 17%). I refer to those qualities considered "incommunicable" and those which demonstrate his moral purity over against the sinfulness of humanity (see above, pages 211ff).

> "He is holy, which means he has no sins. He is also righteous which means there is nothing bad in what he does. He is also powerful. He can make what we cannot, like trees and life. He is also saviour." (Interview 04)

> "Whatever you do here, God can see it. God never sleeps. He can look down at you and see what your mistakes are. He can straighten you out and put in your head, "don't do that, it is evil."" (Interview 35)

An examination of the data around God as "loving, generous, merciful and kind" and God as "holy, righteous and sovereign" reveals no variables which might provide additional insight into these findings. Respondents who attributed these characteristics to God were evenly spread across the variables of gender, age, levels of education and reading ability. However, an examination of variables related to respondents who declared "anger" as a divine attribute are more interesting. Those with higher levels of education are more likely to make this connection. Some 54% (7/13) of all interviewees with a high school education; 33% (8/24) of those with an

elementary education; but only 2% (2/18) of those with no formal education. If we examine the age variable, 50% (6/12) of those under twenty-five years acknowledged that God could express anger; 24% (6/25) of those between the ages of twenty-six and forty-five; 20% (5/24) of those forty-six years and above. And finally, all seventeen of those who attribute anger to God can read. None of the survey population's thirteen non-readers admitted to the possibility of divine anger. We may tentatively conclude that younger, more educated, literate MABCAM members are more likely to admit this as a divine attribute when compared with those who are older, less educated or who cannot read. We may categorise the latter as more traditional Manobo and theorise that the idea of a God who can be angry is a concept that does not blend easily with traditional Manobo values.

In summing up this section, we can recognise the appropriation by Manobo of evangelical Christianity by a degree of fluency in vocabulary that ascribes qualities to God such as "holy," "righteous" and "anger;" all divine attributes that are considered essential to the theological framework foundational to the CBT method that was adopted and used widely by OMF missionaries. However, we must also concede that MABCAM members are much less articulate in speaking of God in these categories as they are in referring to him as a benevolent deity; generous, full of mercy, eager to help, forgiving and gracious. We shall examine the significance of this way of speaking about God later in this chapter.

Living Jesus

> "We need to live Jesus. Love our fellow humans. Live in accordance with his will." (Interview 13)

This section focuses on how MABCAM members and Bible teachers interpret the Bible's message concerning what Manobos' response to the gospel should be. One set of comments indicates that a section of MABCAM members understand the importance of engaging in specifically Christian activities. Twenty interviewees

(33%) insisted on a variety of activities as being important for Christians such as Bible reading, prayer, praise, Sabbath observance and evangelism, with the latter being the most frequently mentioned (14/20). Six of the twenty-three who preached or taught also exhorted members to be active in these ways, with evangelism also being the one most frequently mentioned (3/6). Ten interviewees (16%) simply referred very directly to the Ten Commandments as a basis for ethics and lifestyle, iterating very specifically the commands to "not steal, not commit adultery and not kill."

However, from the data it is clear that the majority of interviewees believe lifestyle, ethics and activities should be predicated on the life of Jesus and his commands, particularly his passion:

> "He always submitted and in this way became an example to all of us so that those who believed would have the same character as him." (Interview 19)
>
> "Our living God died for our lives, for our sins. For me, we should follow him because of what he went through." (Interview 29)
>
> "Like us now, we need to behave like that. If someone says hurtful things then we remain patient also because we know the Lord's character that he continued with his love." (Interview 62).

Twelve of the interviewees (20%) articulated their conviction that the commands, life and/or passion of Jesus should form character and lifestyle in Manobo Christians but it is also hard to resist the conclusion that this was also the case for the many who did not expressly say so. This can be deduced from the numerous statements made concerning the importance of loving one's enemies, showing forgiveness, and refusing to retaliate with those who have wrongfully accused or insulted them or members of their family.

The essence of Christian character and ethics as understood by MABCAM members can be summarised as follows: "An imitation of the life and passion of Jesus that issues in a peaceful harmonious community built on relationships of mutual respect

and generosity." The ideas embedded within many of the comments from respondents reflect Jesus' gentleness, forgiving, submissive spirit and refusal to retaliate which, as we have already noted, are discernible reactions of Jesus within the passion narrative. Comments from forty-eight interviewees (79%) lend support to the summary above. Sometimes a comment was simply the use of the word "forgiveness," used by eighteen interviewees. Many, however, used more unambiguous language:

> "We should build good relationships with people. He tells us to love one another." (Interview 07).
>
> "Spiritual character is what we are to have; full of the spirit and not doing evil. So if people sin against us we forgive them so we can be what God likes. If we don't forgive people we don't get forgiveness from God. If a bad spirit remains with us we do not please God." (Interview 09)
>
> "We must not scold or speak harshly to our fellow people." (Interview 13)
>
> "We love peace and want to follow God's will. A righteous person is someone who follows whatever God teaches us. A person who keeps the peace and creates no disturbance." (Interview 15).
>
> "We should do what he wants us to do. We should be kind and show mercy to others. We should be good to others. Even if we are scolded we should respond with what is good."
>
> Qu. "What do we do if someone slanders us?"
>
> Ans. "We should still be good to them. That is what God wants. It is not good if, when we are scolded that we retaliate with a scolding." (Interview 60)

In addition to these comments that signal the priority ascribed to peace-making qualities within a Manobo Christian's character, there are also numerous references to the importance of an open-handed, benevolent disposition. This is represented by an insistence on the three qualities of hospitality, generosity and food-sharing. Twenty-nine (48%) of interviewees mentioned one or more of these as vital character traits. Refusal to exercise these is considered sinful within Manobo communities; a sentiment apparent within these examples:

> "God wants us to be good to people, to love our fellow Manobo, to show good hospitality, to feed people when they come to your house, to share your betel chew." (Interview 01)

> "If you are Christian you want to get rid of the wickedness in your life and have good character, which is being hospitable and generous and things like that." (Interview 03)

> "So if your friend has no food, what is the use if you have been blessed by God but do not give? . . . If we have *kasava* and sweet potatoes we share it among ourselves . . . That is like what the Bible says, that we should increase our love for one another. It is really evil, according to the Bible, if you are stingy with food when some people have none." (Interview 36)

An examination of the sermons and Sunday school messages reveal a similar commitment to these character qualities. Ten of the twenty-three messages reveal this concern with the themes of loving neighbour, showing respect and hospitality and avoiding conflict. Sunday school message thirty-six merits a closer analysis because of the amount of space given to dealing with the subject of anger. Speaking from James 1:19-27, the speaker reminds her hearers to avoid deceiving themselves by knowing what the word teaches but not doing it (v 22). She then applies this with the example of those who refuse to forgive someone who has wronged them. "That is an example of deceiving ourselves. We know, so why do we deceive ourselves? The point is that we must forgive those who have sinned against us." Elaborating on verse twenty-six and the exhortation to keep a rein on the tongue she comments that, "It is a shame, a waste of our worship if we hear something that is hurtful but we cannot control what we say." When she makes time for her listeners to respond the discussion on "anger" gathers pace. One person remarks on verse 19 that being slow to speak helps avoid anger because it provides us time to find out if what was said is true or not. The important matter was to avoid provoking a fight. Following this, more of the congregants rose to their feet to give examples of how they reacted when they felt they were slandered unfairly by others. None were interested in heaping condemnation upon their accusers; they were instead

concerned about their own responses and whether or not they had sinned by the manner in which they reacted.[623]

In making these comments, the respondents were confident the importance they were ascribing to these character traits was a biblical attitude. “We have to follow the Bible”, said one, “and it says . . . love someone even if we are deeply offended.” (Interview 42). “Believe in the whole Bible,” another insisted, “That is what can help, so that there is no disturbance” (Interview 55), clearly convinced that the Bible can help build a harmonious community if people would believe all of it. And finally the words of another who was in no doubt that, “If you fight back then you have not been listening to the Bible about the character of Jesus.” (Interview 81)

In keeping with the preceding sections the data examined here reveals that appropriate lifestyle, ethics and activities should be determined by Scripture and that the activities expected as a response by the evangelical missionary forebears of MABCAM, such as evangelism, Bible reading and prayer are being practised and becoming an established part of the church landscape. Nonetheless, the majority of MABCAM members insist on qualities, attitudes and priorities that were not integral to the message of the evangelical missionaries who helped found MABCAM, and not an essential element to evangelicalism as it began growing in the Philippines in the 1970s. In the next section we will try to analyse our findings from these three sections.

Understanding the Manobo Hermeneutic

The data collected for this thesis demonstrates in large part, the assertion of a Manobo hermeneutic that is true to its own context and which conforms more closely to the deep-rooted values of Manobo culture and cosmology. It will become apparent in this final section of the chapter that the latter has exerted a greater

[623] Sunday School lesson 36.

influence on how Manobo Christians read and interpret the Bible than the interpretive grid assembled from within the matrix of evangelicalism and conveyed by OMF missionaries.

MABCAM members and the Death of Christ

Looking again at the place of the death of Christ within Manobo Christianity, we are confronted with an appreciation of Jesus' passion that, at first glance, can appear to have more in common with grassroots Catholicism in the Philippines than with evangelicalism. Localised Catholic practice in the islands has traditionally expressed devotion to the suffering Christ in a multitude of ways. In chapter five, we noted briefly how the *Pasyon* as Christian text inspired eighteenth-century revolutionary movements among the Filipino masses in Luzon (see chapter five, page 182ff). Fenella Cannell has written of the devotion shown by local Catholics in Bicol, southern Luzon, within the cult of the *Amang Hinulid*.[624] Cannell comments that the dead Christ "arouses pity as he lies wanly on his bier" and is more important to local devotees "than either Christ crucified or Christ risen."[625] Women who perform particular acts of devotion to the *Ama* see their suffering "as one with that of Mary for the suffering Christ," and this shared experience, this sharing of intimacy in suffering, "leads to sharing in the healing power and help of the holy persons."[626] The same can be said of those who perform acts of self-flagellation and crucifixion as a part of Good Friday celebrations in the Philippines. Intimacy with Christ, achieved by sharing in his crucifixion, can be done to secure protection from serious illness.[627]

[624] The words mean "Christ laid out in death." Cannell, *Power and Intimacy,* 13. Central to the cult is a full-sized statue of the dead Christ which lies in a local shrine in the village of Calabanga, 165.
[625] Ibid, 180.
[626] Ibid, 190-91.
[627] Zialcita, *Popular Interpretations,* 58-60

However, this adaptation of the suffering Christ does not correspond completely with the data of this research. Manobo Christians, though attracted like lowland Catholics to the gentle kindness of the suffering Jesus, do not engage in any kind of ritual or discourse that suggests they view intimacy with the suffering Jesus as a means to access power. This is a cherished value within grassroots Filipino Catholicism, but the reality is that Filipino Catholicism has never succeeded in exerting much influence within the highlands of central Mindanao. Instead, this author suggests that the evidence from the data of interview and sermon presents MABCAM members being drawn to the suffering Christ because in his passion he demonstrates his love and pity for them and draws forth the same from them as his disciples. This emotional response has some similarities with that of Catholics who express devotion to statues of the dead Christ, but it is this author's view that the source of the Manobo response is located at the heart of Manobo cosmology, already discussed in chapter three, and not in Philippine Catholicism. On a day-to-day basis, Manobo deal with the world of the *diwata*, spirit beings that occupy an invisible domain but who nevertheless regularly interface with the society of humans (chapter three, pages 84ff). Though the world of *diwata* is populated by both beneficent and malign spirits, Manobo are in general afraid of the intrusion of any spirit into their world; there is always the risk of being overwhelmed. What is at stake is an imbalance of power that threatens to diminish the human in the spirit-versus-human encounter. What the human expects and the *baylan* works to secure on their behalf is "pity" and the right to be treated with dignity by other more powerful people and by the *diwata* (chapter three, page 92ff). The evidence suggests that it is the underlying hope on the part of Manobo for pity and kindness from the spiritual domain that underlies MABCAM members' natural attraction to the Christ with a gentle heart, who suffers and dies on behalf of those he loves and in return evokes pity from them. This has more in common with the insights of Filipino theologians like Leonardo Mercado and Melba Maggay, who see in Filipino devotion to the suffering Christ a connection ignited by his being a fellow-sufferer.

Commenting on the cult of the *Santo Entierro,* Mercado declares it appropriate because he (the dead Christ) is an inspiration "to people who suffer in a sub-human condition and far from the realization of God's Kingdom."[628] Maggay concurs with this explanation when she writes, "In a profoundly moving way, the Cross assures us that pain is a language He [God] understands."[629]

However, for Manobo Christians, Christ in his passion is much more than an empathetic companion on the road of life. As we shall see, his response in the face of human anger and violence is also something that shapes the Manobo Christian character and ethic, how they believe life should be lived.

MABCAM Members and the Character of God

This need and expectation of mercy also helps explain the data from MABCAM members and Bible teachers on the character of God. Some 85% of interviewees used terms to describe God as one who is willing to reach out in mercy to help, heal and restore (see above, page 226). Conversely, this foundational hope for pity and kindness helps to explain why a much smaller percentage of interviewees and speakers made mention of God's sovereign incommunicable qualities, or to his being righteous, holy and able to express anger. If we consider only the attribute of divine anger, the data pointed to more traditional Manobo being generally uneasy about anger as a divine attribute (see above, page 228ff). We can begin to understand this level of disquiet about anger by considering important elements of Manobo customary law. Anger is a volatile emotion and one which endangers the stability and peace of Manobo communities. An individual aroused to anger has the capacity to be violent, a potential tragedy that can only be obviated through judicious application of the customary law by a competent *datu* (chapter three,

[628] Leonardo N. Mercado, *Doing Filipino Theology* (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1997), 132-33. The *Santo Entierro* is a statue of the dead Christ which lies within the famous Quiapo Church in downtown Manila.
[629] Melba P. Maggay, *The Gospel in Filipino Context* (Manila: OMF Literature Inc., 1987), 7.

page 102ff). Being mindful of this deeply-rooted cultural aversion to anger, it is not difficult to imagine Manobo Christians' preference for accenting the gentleness, mercy and "humility" of God in their Bible reading. A God with these qualities would be sure to respond with pity and mercy towards the Manobo supplicant. Missionary G wrote on the significance of mercy for Manobo after researching the workings of a particular messianic cult: "This is then what seems to be a general Manobo hope or desire – for God to have mercy on them. It is expressed in this hope that they will be taken up to heaven. So the story of Boyboy may be the thing that fosters this hope . . ."[630]

MABCAM Members' Response and Lifestyle

A focus on Manobo cosmology and the strategic importance of the role of *datu* and Manobo *batasan,* can also help us understand the Manobo response to the Christian message. For the majority of MABCAM members, response is defined in terms of Christian lifestyle, character and ethical norms. A large majority of interview participants and a considerable number of speakers once again indicated that the passion of Christ was the point of departure when commenting on this. There were numerous references to the importance of forgiveness, eschewing behaviour like back-biting and slander which destroys the reputations of others and, of particular importance, resisting the natural impulse to retaliate with anger even when they are innocent targets of other people's defamatory comments. A strong contingent of participants also believe very strongly that Manobo Christians' lives should demonstrate the qualities of hospitality, generosity and food-sharing (see above, page 231ff).

There is strong correspondence between these opinions and the discernible ethic at the centre of Manobo cosmology and customary law. Our study of the Manobo

[630] Missionary G, "Manobo Desires," March 1980. Boyboy is a figure within a Manobo legend who was taken up into the sky with his companions.

cosmos revealed that sharing, reciprocity and generosity were central to maintaining the stability of relationships between Manobo and *diwata*. In addition, anyone at the receiving end of the *diwatas'* beneficence was expected to share with their kin and reciprocate with the *diwata* (chapter three, pages 93ff). To refuse a kin's request for food was to deny them pity and, in turn, diminish their standing before others. Behaviour like this would cause considerable hurt to a Manobo's *goinawa*, a state of affairs that could lead to an explosion of anger and, in turn, to violence, hence the importance of the Manobo *batasan*, the unwritten law that prescribed how to live in properly constituted relationships of respect with other Manobo (chapter three, page 102). However, what also emerges from the data of this thesis is that anger can also be dealt with by the offended party in a way that runs counter to traditional Manobo values. The example of the suffering Christ, who refused to retaliate but rather forgave his accusers and those who handed him over to death, appears to have provided Manobo Christians with a new model for countervailing the menacing effects of anger upon community. According to a majority of the survey population for this thesis, an offended *goinawa* should be handled by forgiving the slanderer, refusing to retaliate, and developing a gentle heart, rather than anger, violence and the demand for appeasement and restitution.

Earlier we referred to the discussions on anger within a Sunday school class (see above, page 232). In bringing discussion to a close, the speaker returned to the microphone and shared a personal anecdote which illustrates this "new way" for handling anger. She related how earlier in life she had once taken a knife to confront someone who had made offensive comments about one of her relatives. She finished by saying, "That was our character before God was in our *goinawa*. We would hate others. But now we can give thanks for the Word of God that has arrived here with us; slowly but surely our mind is being enlightened" (Sunday school 36).

However, though this data could be read as depicting an ethic that is countercultural, at the same time it also displays strong continuity with indigenous religion, being governed by an objective that is local and traditional, that is the maintenance of a harmonious and stable Manobo society. This was, and still is, of central importance within the Manobo psyche, made essential by their longstanding independence from state control and the relative inability of the state's law enforcement bodies to exercise authority in the hinterlands of Mindanao (see chapter three, pages 107ff). The same can be said for the issue of repentance. Missionary expectation was that converts would make a break with the rituals and belief system centred in the spiritual domain. This was a radical, counter-cultural demand. In the previous chapter our data revealed that the indigenous authorities of customary law and the inhabitants of the spiritual domain had largely been replaced by biblical authority, signifying that missionary expectations in this regard have largely been realised. Nevertheless, as the discussion in the previous paragraphs has made clear, if the rituals and deference to the *diwata* have largely vanished from Manobo Christian communities, the ethic at the nexus of the relationship between humans and spirits is still very much alive and shaping the values and lifestyle of bible-reading Manobo.

Mapping Manobo Reading and Interpretation

Our analysis of how Manobo Christians within MABCAM interpret the Bible reveals a radical reconfiguration of how missionaries read the Bible and their expectations of how Manobo converts would read and respond to the Bible's message of salvation. We can discern the presence of two themes that we will focus on briefly in this section, that of resistance and the shaping power of local cosmology and customary law.

Resistance to missionary readings of Scripture by local Christians emerges frequently from the research of scholars within the worlds of the Anthropology of

Christianity and World Christianity. Engelke, already referred to in chapter five, believes that an awareness of the materiality of Scripture, "the book as object" leads to a reconfiguration of reading and interpretation, proving that "there is no such thing as a simple reading and study of the Bible."[631] Missionaries, according to Engelke, "failed to account for an important fact: Africans might read the Bible differently."[632] In making this point, Engelke quotes from the observations of David Rood, an American Board missionary in South Africa in 1869 who became frustrated with how local Christians would argue in favour of the bride price and polygyny by using Old Testament texts:

> "Take such questions as polygamy or the demanding of cattle for daughters when given in marriage, they will go back to the Old Testament history, to Jacob and others, and they will say that they find these customs were approved by God and nowhere in the Bible do they find them forbidden, and they will argue with zeal and boldness."[633]

A similar example of local resistance to missionary reading from Africa comes from the writing of Kĩriakũ Kĩnyua in his monograph on the Agĩkũyũ encounter with the Bible in Kenya. Kĩnyua draws attention to how the death of Christ was interpreted in the 1950s by "revivalists," Kenyan Christians who had been converted through the East African Revival. According to Kĩnyua they persistently emphasised "conversion through washing by the blood of Jesus and an assurance that one is "saved" by Jesus Christ in a personal way."[634] Though their interpretation resembled the classic theory of the atonement it also differed from the latter because it was used by the revivalists to commit to pacifism. Kĩnyua quotes John Gatu who explains that the revivalists' principle was, "Having taken the blood of Jesus, I cannot take any other

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[631] Engelke, *A Problem of Presence,* 48.
[632] Ibid, 62
[633] Norman Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), 157. Quoted in Engelke, *A Problem of Presence,* 64.
[634] Johnson Kĩriakũ Kĩnyua, *Introducing Ordinary African Readers' Hermeneutics: A Case Study of the Agikuyu Encounter with the Bible*, ed. M.M. Francis James, vol. 54, Religions and Discourse (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), 278.

blood."[635] The revivalists' rationale for this interpretation was that war was wrong and they could not support it biblically. Kĩnyua believes that the context in which they spoke also contributed to their interpretation. In the public arena it would have shielded them from possible accusations that they were complicit in local Mau-Mau activities but would also have acted as a commentary against colonial "churchism" which demanded certain credentials be evidenced in an individual's life before they could be admitted as Christian. For the revivalists, it was sufficient that a man or woman be "washed by the blood of Jesus" to be admitted to the body of Christ. Whatever line of reasoning one decides the revivalists adopted, they were all in effect, like Manobo readings of the death of Christ, forms of resistance to a missionary reading.[636]

The power of local cosmology and customs to shape biblical interpretation is also a phenomenon that rises from the pages of other scholars. Anthropologist Lorraine Aragon has written on how the cosmology of the Tobaku of Sulawesi has shaped local expressions of Protestant Christianity. Aragon explains that though the Salvation Army missionaries labelled the spirits of Tobaku cosmology as demons, the behaviour of these spirits was nevertheless "readily applied to the Christian God, and, indeed, in many cases they were supported by interpretations of biblical verses."[637] Aragon refers to the example of Christian parents of a sick child who sacrificed a pig in a thanksgiving ritual. The illness was interpreted as God's wrath against the parents for the sin of moving their swidden border markers. Local Indonesian Salvation Army officers read a portion of Scripture at the ritual referring to God's anger against those who take the land of their brothers.[638]

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[635] John Gatu, *Joyfully Christian, Truly Christian,* (Nairobi: Acton, 2006): 42. Quoted in Kĩnyua, 280.
[636] Ibid, 281.
[637] Lorraine V. Aragon, "Reorganizing the Cosmology: The Reinterpretation of Deities and Religious Practice by Protestants in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 27, no. 2 (1996): 364.
[638] Ibid, 366

In another example, Marina Behera, writing on the encounter of the Mizo of Northeast India with Christianity, documents how the cosmology of traditional Mizo society was integral to guaranteeing health and healing for local communities: by health and healing was meant a dynamic state of wellbeing of the individual and society. Behera states that "much of the indigenous cosmology and traditional beliefs have been preserved while at the same time being reshaped by the insertion of Christian doctrines."[639] However, she also makes the point that "Protestant Christianity was itself modified as a result of its insertion into a Mizo world-view." An example is how many of the *thianglo* (taboos) which originally guaranteed a code of conduct providing for a harmonious community life have been "subsumed within Christian ethical teaching." "Living one's life following the example of Jesus with a love for one's neighbour has promoted healing and reconciliation among the Mizo people."[640]

These examples from Africa, Indonesia and India represent similar dynamics at play as Manobo engage with the Bible. Resistance to missionary readings is simultaneously accompanied by an assertion of cultural and cosmological values in the interpretive process. Missionary attempts to diabolise the Tobaku world were only partially successful as the character of God and interpretation of Scripture was, in turn, shaped by local cosmology. Similarly with the Mizo, traditional taboos still influence the form of what it means to live in obedience to Christ with its accent on the importance of community harmony.

Conclusion

These findings on the Manobo reading of the Bible and its divergence from missionary expectations uncover two motifs that have wider significance for

[639] Marina Ngursangzeli Behera, "Mizo Beliefs and the Christian Gospel: Their Interaction with Reference to the Concepts of Health and Healing," *Studies in World Christianity* 20, no. 1 (2014): 50.
[640] Ibid, 50.

scholarship in World Christianity: The relationship between a) missionary Christianity and indigenous religiosity; and b) western individualism and indigenous values of corporate responsibility.

Evangelicalism and Indigenous religion

When nineteenth-century Protestant missionaries first encountered the belief systems of many East Asians, they would treat indigenous peoples' firm convictions about the intricacies of the spirit world as superstition. These missionaries tended to view Christianity as being "of a piece with the strictly empirical mindsets underlying science and technology."[641] As Edwin Zehner puts it, the missionaries tended to battle superstition by simply "talking past it."[642] This was also the case for Protestant mission agencies in Mindanao. The ABCFM report of 1912 referred to Mindanao in the following terms: "There is no region under the American flag that is so filled with savagery, ignorance and superstition as this island, and we of the American Board hold the key to its Christianization."[643]

Nowadays, evangelical missionaries are less likely to debunk spirit beliefs; the preference now is to affirm the presence of other-worldly spirits but to interpret them within a Christian framework. Nevertheless, the resultant effect is still a negative position towards the indigenous cosmologies of Asia and Africa with local spirits now generally being classified as dangerous powers. We have already taken note of this in chapter five with reference to how OMF missionaries diabolised the Manobo spiritual domain, a tendency also common within Pentecostal/Charismatic mission within the Philippines (chapter five, page 186ff). This simplistic theological assessment of the world of Manobo *diwata* was adopted by OMF missionaries despite acknowledging that Manobo considered the environmental spirits as kindly

[641] Edwin Zehner, "Thai Protestants and Local Supernaturalism," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 27, no. 2 (1996): 293.
[642] Ibid, 294
[643] *Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission,* 1912, 185.

and generally non-threatening to humans (chapter two, page 97). The ramifications of collapsing all spirit beings into a single category which classified them as evil or demonic were that missionaries were unable to accept the reality of ethical values at the core of Manobo cosmology, or that this same cosmology might legitimately shape Manobo interpretation of the Bible and the life of Christ.[644] Despite missionary diabolisation of the Manobo's spiritual domain, and a generally negative stance toward it within evangelical publications, this thesis points to ethical values at the heart of Manobo cosmology and that these have quietly and subtly exerted influence in the ongoing forming of a Manobo interpretation of the Bible and response to the gospel.

Individualism vs Community Consciousness

Individualism is frequently listed as one of the many features of the Enlightenment that has left its mark on western Christianity. Mission theologian David Bosch was in no doubt about its legacy:

> "It's most immediately recognisable effect on Christianity was the rampant individualism which soon pervaded Protestantism in particular . . . because individuals were liberated and independent, they could make their own decisions about what they believed."[645]

In our conclusion to chapter two we noted that Protestant mission agencies to Mindanao in the post-World War II decades were committed to church planting, and to seeing a strong personal spirituality among new believers characterised by Bible reading, prayer, evangelism and a lifestyle that broke with past attachments to indigenous cosmology (chapter two, page 73). We also referred to this earlier in this chapter, noting the influence upon this individualistic approach to mission by

[644] An example of this can be found in an article by SIL translator and anthropologist Richard Elkins. Writing about the Manobo spirit world, Elkins states: "There seems to be little of consistent ethics or morality perceived in the supernatural hierarchy." Elkins, *Blood Sacrifice,* 323. Later in the same article, with reference to the Manobo, he comments on, "the tyranny of their worldview which subjects them to the whims of the demonic hierarchy." 329.

[645] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1991), 273.

the Church Growth movement (see above, page 218). Filipino theologians have frequently called into question the appropriateness of a message with such an individualistic orientation to the Philippines' context.

> "The Filipino's community orientation poses an additional challenge to a practice of evangelism that comes with the wrappings of Western individualism" writes Melba Maggay . . . "Too often, in the prevailing evangelistic practice, salvation is advertised as a purely private entrance into an other-worldly kingdom."[646]

The data from this thesis suggests that despite the concern for the individual at the heart of the missionary message, Manobo readings of the Bible have led them to forming a response to the gospel that has communitarian issues at its heart. Manobo Christians favour a response to the gospel that imitates the humility of the suffering Christ and practices generosity and hospitality, qualities which are valued, not because they are essential to a personal salvation, but as the data has shown, because they have value in building community harmony and restraining the outbreak of anger and violence within Manobo communities. They are qualities that align with the aims of Manobo customary law and Manobo cosmology. This contrasts sharply with the gospel message and response which missionaries read from the pages of the Bible. Missionaries expected a response to their presentation of the gospel in terms of an awareness of sin that led to faith in Christ and a break from the world of spirits.[647] This author found no data to suggest that missionaries ever presented their gospel in terms of a lifestyle that would enhance community harmony by providing the means to counter the baleful threat of anger and violence.

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[646] Melba P. Maggay, "Towards Sensitive Engagement with Filipino Indigenous Consciousness," *International Review of Mission* 87, no. 346 (July 1998): 369.

[647] Birgit Meyer's research on the Peki Ewe, referred to in the previous chapter, also portrays NMG missionaries wanting evidence of a feeling of sinfulness among the Ewe who wished to convert. The missionaries frequently complained about how seldom this was in evidence and that the self-image of the Ewe was too positive. Meyer, *Translating the Devil,* 99-100. Kĩnyua records the same expectation on the part of missionaries who evangelised in the rehabilitation camps in Kenya. Kĩnyua, *Introducing,* 261.

In summing up, this chapter has provided a brief insight into how Manobo Christians as ordinary, indigenous readers of the Bible have appropriated and interpreted the Bible in line with values at the core of their own world-view and in a way that is congruent with the needs and hopes of their own immediate context. In doing so they have resisted some cherished doctrinal readings that have been absolutised by missionaries and reconfigured these for their own ends. This author believes that the findings of this chapter have also made plain what was introduced in chapter five, that the Manobo, like other indigenous people across the world have been much more than passive recipients of Christianity.

Chapter Seven. Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, the objective has been to make plain to the reader how indigenous Manobo Christians from central Mindanao have received and appropriated the Bible in a distinctive manner. The appropriation process has been uniquely shaped and informed by a range of factors. Core elements within Manobo cosmology have had a discernible influence along with the societal demand for harmony within human relationships. Another factor has been the attraction of modernity, something that has been a potent force within many indigenous peoples whose lives have been radically disrupted. In order to make plain the unique form of Manobo Christians' appropriation of Scripture, an analytic process was employed which involved triangulation between data gathered as a result of the author's fieldwork in Mindanao, with primary texts that provided insight into the Bible's place within foreign missionary polities and with the primary themes at the centre of Manobo cosmology.

Missionaries – whether from colonial or post-colonial eras, whether Iberian Catholic religious or American Protestant, whether from denominational or faith mission agencies – presented Christian instruction and/or the Bible with an undiluted confidence that their mission was ordained by God and essential for the wellbeing and spiritual salvation of Mindanao's indigenous peoples. Additional reinforcement was given to this confidence on the part of Spanish and American missionaries, by a firm conviction that there were additional benefits to be had for the inhabitants of Mindanao from the charitable intentions of their respective governments.[648]

[648] In his description of the visit by boatloads of Manobo to Butuan in 1879, to greet the Jesuit priest Saturnino Urios, Pastells illustrates this point well, depicting the Manobo as those who "were now placed at the feet of Christ. . . . to be deeply loved from now on, and to be swaddled and protected in the folds of the Spanish flag." Pablo Pastells, *Mission to Mindanao, 1859-1900 : From the Spanish of Pablo Pastells*, trans. Peter Schreurs, vol. 1 (Cebu City: San Carlos Publications, 1994), 266. In a report concerning American missionary activity on the island we read, "Patriotism allies itself with religion as a strong motive for American Congregationalists to fulfil their mission to Mindanao." Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1920-21; 136.

The Protestant faith missions in Mindanao, however, of which OMF International was one, and which began with the arrival of the C&MA in 1901, did not look to government or ecclesial authority for confidence and/or conviction regarding the legitimacy of their mission. For faith missions these were located within a principle at the heart of the movement. Faith missions' personnel engaged in mission as a response to the personal call of God, something which Klaus Fiedler describes as the "starting point of their missiology".[649] This stance was transparently obvious in the attitude of J.A. McKee, the first C&MA missionary to Mindanao. In an article in the C&MA weekly magazine in 1902, McKee complained of the restrictions that an American treaty with the Moro population of Mindanao was placing upon Christian evangelism. In defiant mood, McKee declared that, "Where Jesus goes before, of what effect is a treaty upheld by the arms of a great nation; or how much shall we heed the command of a major-general that would interfere! Where he leads, I'll follow."[650]

Subsumed within their confidence in the call of God into mission lay the faith mission workers' certainty concerning the centrality of Scripture to their methods. In this thesis we have explored the fundamental components of this core precept as they have emerged from within the mission practices of OMF workers among the Manobo of central Mindanao. We isolated these as being: the strategic importance of the Bible being available in the mother-tongue languages of indigenous peoples; the supreme authority of a divinely inspired Bible that supersedes and transcends all local sources of spiritual authority; and a hermeneutic that condensed the Bible's message to a redemption-centric message that offers forgiveness to a sinful humanity. Manobo who became Christians in the wake of missionary evangelism received a Bible that had been mediated in this way and brought to their encounter

[649] Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions,* 24. Fiedler traces this principle to the influence of the Brethren movement upon faith missions in general. See pages 171-72 of Fiedler.
[650] McKee, *Shall the Moros be Evangelized,* 58.

the complexities of Manobo culture and the distinctives of their own cosmology. Though faith missions could generally be quite pragmatic regarding ecclesiology, as Fiedler points out, they nevertheless expected the churches they planted to adopt "the same fundamental dogmatics."[651] This thesis is an account of how missionary dogmatics regarding Scripture and its interpretation were encountered by the Manobo. We shall distil the findings of the research, as they pertain to the core themes that were explored, by using the rubrics of embrace, resistance and modification. Following this we shall conclude this chapter with some thoughts on what Manobo appropriation of the Bible might contribute to the translatability of Evangelical Christianity.

Embrace

In chapter two we briefly investigated the place of Manobo customary law that, in the hands of a skilful *datu,* is designed to resolve conflict between fellow Manobo and forestall the outbreak of anger and violence. This law is an indigenous body of oral knowledge, and it is an oft-quoted maxim from some quarters that indigenous oral communities are largely resistant to the lure of written text and indeed to writing in general. Scott maintains that the highland communities of Southeast Asia deliberately opted for a way of life free from written texts. Choosing against literacy was a crucial ingredient for a way of life calibrated to avoid state control but also to stymie the possibility of centralised control taking root within their own communities. According to Scott, having no written texts allowed for the "plasticity" that hill cultures value, while writing was associated with census and preparation for taxation.[652] In addition, we made reference to those who have categorised the introduction of the Bible to oral societies as a form of hegemony, designed to subjugate local peoples and to neutralise the power of their oral texts and

[651] Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions,* 323.
[652] Scott, *The Art of not being Governed,* 228-29.

traditions.[653] Nevertheless, the Manobo of central Mindanao have embraced the core Christian text, the Bible. The majority of Manobo Christians who are members of MABCAM own their own Bibles; they read and regularly study these and, as the research data reveals, many are able to draw on texts from memory to explain their own views on matters relating to faith and conduct.

Members of MABCAM have also embraced the Bible as being superior to that of local sources of spiritual and cultural authority. The majority of those interviewed declared the Bible to be the Word of God and also acknowledged its authority as having superseded that of the spirit world and the *baylan*, and that of Manobo customary law or *batasan*, and the *datu*. The evangelical missionary discourse on the Bible as divinely inspired, and the only legitimate, authoritative, text for the Christian has been enthusiastically appropriated by the Manobo Christians of central Mindanao. Indigenous sources of authority are adjudged by the majority of Manobo Christians to be in conflict with the Bible's teaching. The world of spirits was declared to be a world full of 'other gods' or indeed 'false gods', a concept congruent with the biblical testimony to monotheism. The rules and guidelines of Manobo *batasan* were also reckoned as being culture-bound, with their origins in the minds of people and traditions of their communities, not with God.

Finally, we note that MABCAM members have also embraced the evangelical "language of salvation."[654] The use of the Bible by OMF missionaries to articulate a gospel message that was preoccupied with the offer of a personal salvation, issued in a distinctive vocabulary that has been incorporated by Manobo Christians' into

[653]For an explication of the dynamics at work in the introduction of literacy and the Bible during the period of European colonisation, cf. James Collins and Richard K. Blot, *Literacy and Literacies : Texts, Power, and Identity* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 121-54.
[654] For an example of evangelical Christians being categorised as those who "speak the language of salvation," cf. C. Mathews Samson, "Conversion at the Boundaries of Religion, Identity, and Politics in Pluricultural Guatemala," in *Beyond Syncretism and Conversion: Indigenous Encounters with Missionary Christianity, 1800-2000*, ed. David Lindenfeld and Miles Richardson (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012), 61.

their own discourse on Christianity. The death of Christ occupies an important place within the Manobo hermeneutic, including references to his death being "for sin." Words like "holy", "righteous" and "anger" are used to modify speech about God – all terms that one might frequently encounter within evangelical discourses on soteriology.

Resistance

Manobo resistance to elements of the evangelical missionary paradigm on Scripture is not necessarily resistance in favour of Manobo cultural values. This thesis records a resistance on the part of Manobo Christians to use of the Bible in their mother tongue. Probing the reasons for this resistance became a significant element of this thesis, largely because of the importance attached to vernacular translation of the Bible by African scholars such as Lamin Sanneh and Kwame Bediako, and by distinguished linguists like Eugene Nida and Ken Pike. Nida and Pike argued that greater cognisance accompanies reading the Bible in the mother tongue, which in turn enhances the Bible's evangelistic potential as well as producing stronger, more resilient churches. Sanneh and Bediako contended that vernacular translations have restored the dignity of African minority languages and their speakers. This, in turn, has opened up new possibilities for social change and advancement among Africa's minority peoples by undermining the colonial narrative and its inherently pejorative assessment of their language and way of life. Notwithstanding the reasons given by these established scholars, the Manobo clearly prefer to read Scripture in the Cebuano language, the *lingua franca*. The longstanding presence of state-run schools in Manobo territory means most Manobo have grown up learning to read in Cebuano and with good understanding. The immigration of Visayan settlers has changed the demographics of Manobo communities and been a catalyst for accelerated change within the Manobo languages.[655] Most Manobo have imbibed

[655] Accelerated language change refers to the speed of change within the Manobo language that makes reading an older translated version of the language less appealing.

the alterations to their language without hesitation, something that has increased their discomfort in trying to read translations of the Bible done in more archaic versions of Manobo language. Also, *contra* Bediako and Sanneh, the Manobo have discovered that fluency in the Cebuano language, not Manobo, is providing them with new opportunities for upward mobility and prestige. The importance of this particular form of resistance is that it points out the fragility of what is an essentialist standpoint on language within the world of Bible translation and within some sectors of the evangelical missionary movement. The Bible-reading habits of MABCAM members demonstrate that indigenous Christians can read with understanding in a majority language to which their own language is closely related, and is easy to learn. It is not inevitable that indigenous Christians, from minority language groups, suffer a diminution of their self-esteem by doing so.[656]

Another point of resistance on the part of Manobo Christians is against the use of the Bible on the part of missionaries to indiscriminately "diabolise" the entire world of the Manobo *diwata.*[657] In their study of Manobo cosmology, OMF missionaries acknowledged that the Manobo considered certain *diwata*, particularly those categorised as "environmental" spirits, as beneficent beings who act as guardians of wild game and crops planted in Manobo swidden and that others were considered as malevolent, hostile to the world of humans. Despite recognising this distinction, OMF missionaries tended to interpret the entire world of *diwata* as a demonic realm, a trend which is also observable within Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in the Philippines and in much of Africa. It is in effect the imposition of a Christian dualism upon what is a multifaceted and intricate complex. In response, Manobo Christians, though they acknowledged the superior authority of the Bible over against that of the spiritual domain and the *baylan,* were generally reluctant to unilaterally classify every category of spirit as being demonic. The salience of this

[656] Cf., Smalley, *Translation as Mission,* 136-149.
[657] The term "diabolise" comes from the writings of Birgit Meyer. Cf., Meyer, *Translating the Devil.*

resistance points up an unwillingness on the part of Manobo Christians to allow the foisting of foreign categories onto their own experience. Amos Yong, in his review of Julie Ma's account of Pentecostal mission among the Kankana-ey in northern Luzon, is critical of Pentecostal missionaries' proclivity for also demonising the ancestor spirits of the Kankana-ey. Yong insists that "local theologies need to emerge from an ongoing dialectical conversation between the local and the global,"[658] suggesting that Pentecostal cosmology itself needs to be deconstructed.[659]

Modification

Modification of a particular expression of Christianity is at the heart of the process of reception by those who are evangelised. Modification also implies the presence of resistance and embrace, already referred to above. One cannot modify what one has not in some part embraced and a measure of resistance to what one has encountered is the precursor to the process of modification. In embracing the Bible and acknowledging its authority, Manobo Christians within MABCAM have nevertheless modified what Saurabh Dube describes as the "interests and expectations of the missionaries."[660] Manobo Christians have adopted the Bible as an essential text for their own journey into modernity, alongside other prerequisites for this journey such as education, technology and submission to the national government. The Bible has also been invested as an object of power, able to heal from sickness and to protect and deliver the believer from evil spirits as well as being considered a text which has the power to restore through reading, a book with a strong sensual element that can provide an encounter with transcendence. The Manobo context did not require a doctrine of Scripture that would withstand

[658] Amos Yong, "Going Where the Spirit Goes: Engaging the Spirit(S) in J.C. Ma's Pneumatological Missiology," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10, no. 2 (2002): 120.
[659] Ibid, 126-27.
[660] Saurabh Dube, ""Conversion, Translation, and Life-History in Colonial Central India," in *Beyond Syncretism and Conversion: Indigenous Encounters with Missionary Christianity, 1800-2000*, ed. David Lindenfeld and Miles Richardson (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012), 32.

the onslaughts of liberal theology and modernism, and OMF missionaries, quite rightly, made no attempt to impose one upon the emerging Manobo church. Nevertheless, in presenting the Bible as the Word of God, and divinely inspired, missionaries expected Manobo Christians to acknowledge its authority solely by study and obedience. The Manobo response has not been to reject the importance of study and life application, but rather, in addition to the latter, to make the Bible function as authoritative in new ways, unexpected by the missionaries.

Manobo Christians have also modified what were central tenets of the missionary hermeneutic. The missionary hermeneutic was one that held out the promise of an individual and personal salvation via a message that accented human sinfulness, the death of Christ as penal substitution and God as holy and righteous. The human response expected by missionaries was an awareness of sin, to receive Christ by faith and to exhibit repentance by abandoning any kind of practice that suggested ongoing links with the *diwata*. This 'language of salvation' has been embraced by MABCAM members but significantly modified. MABCAM members ascribe to the death of Christ as "atonement for sin" but are more drawn to the death of Christ as exemplar; one who shows them how to live in response to opposition, to attacks on one's character and false accusations. Manobo Christians are also more comfortable referring to God as a benevolent deity; one who is generous, forgiving, merciful and gracious. The Christian response should be a life like that of Christ, characterised by mercy and generosity, slowness to anger, readiness to demonstrate forgiveness; in short, one that enhances community harmony. The Manobo hermeneutic is one which prioritises the lived life of Christ, drawing inspiration from it as material that can shape lifestyle and character.

Manobo Christians, the Bible and Evangelical Christianity

In chapter five we had reason to refer to what David Bebbington has listed as the four defining elements of evangelical Christianity (chapter five, n. 442), a core which Bebbington argues has "remained remarkably constant down the centuries."[661] Two of those elements have occupied our attention in this thesis, namely biblicism and crucicentrism. Attention was given to biblicism in chapter five when we examined how the doctrine of biblical authority, espoused by OMF missionaries, was appropriated by Manobo Christians. Our focus turned to crucicentrism in chapter six because the evangelical hermeneutic typically demands an interpretation of Christ's death that conforms with the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.

In an article published ten years after the publication of Bebbington's book, acclaimed evangelical leader, John Stott, writing on the critical place of Scripture within evangelisation, made the claim that, "the Church's commitment to world evangelization is commensurate with the degree of its conviction about the authority of the Bible."[662] Later in the same article he states that the Bible "gives us the message for world evangelization," and then makes reference to the Lausanne Covenant, paragraph four, which reads, "to evangelize is to spread the good news that Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe."[663] Stott quotes from the Lausanne covenant in his article, a document produced following the first Lausanne congress in 1974. The more recent confession of faith by the Lausanne movement, known as *The Cape Town Commitment* (CTC), produced following the movement's more recent congress in Cape Town in 2010, contains similar

[661] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism,* 4.
[662] John R.W. Stott, "The Bible in World Evangelization," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 21.
[663] Ibid, 22.

commitments to both of these poles of evangelical orthodoxy. Concerning the Bible, in a section entitled, "We Love God's Word," the CTC declares, "We receive the whole Bible as the Word of God, inspired by God's Spirit, spoken and written through human authors. We submit to it as supremely and uniquely authoritative, governing our belief and our behaviour."[664] Concerning the death of Christ, "In his death on the cross, Jesus took our sin upon himself in our place, bearing its full cost, penalty and shame, defeated death and the powers of evil, and accomplished the reconciliation and redemption of all creation."[665]

These references to John Stott and the CTC confirm that the two core elements of Bebbington's quadrilateral which concern us in this thesis continue to be loyally defended and affirmed by evangelicals today and are presented as truths which should characterise all evangelicals across the world.[666] What concerns us within this thesis is the translatability across cultures of evangelical Christianity. Evangelical scholars do give heed to the importance of the translatability process, something which usually takes place under the rubric of studies in 'contextualisation'. According to missiologist Stephen Bevans, evangelicals tend to operate with what he has called a 'translation model' of contextualisation. Adherents of this model posit an unchanging supra-cultural message of the gospel which requires translation into new cultural settings. There is strong belief in a gospel core, like the kernel of a seed, which arrives in a new culture wrapped in the 'husk' of the cultures and traditions of the conveying missionaries.[667] This gospel must then be covered in a

[664] Rose Dowsett, *The Cape Town Commitment, Study Edition: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action* (Massachusetts: Hendricks Publishers, 2012), 24.
[665] Ibid, 17. This quote comes from section four, of part one of the CTC entitled, "We Love God the Son."
[666] The Lausanne movement represents a worldwide evangelical community, and biblical authority and the death of Christ as substitutionary atonement are two of a catalogue of doctrines contained in part one of the CTC, listed as "primary truths on which we must have unity." Ibid, xii.
[667] It is Robert Schreiter who defines the translation model using the metaphor of "husk and kernel". "The kernel has to hulled time and again, as it were, to allow it to be translated into new cultural contexts." Cf. Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (New York: Orbis, 1985), 7.

new husk, namely the cultural forms and concepts of the receiver culture.[668] If that which is reckoned as the "kernel" or core of the gospel is perceived as being modified in the contextualisation process then syncretism is said to have taken place. Reading the CTC with its list of "primary truths" (see above n. 666), it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Bevans' description of evangelicalisms' general approach is not wide of the mark.

What this thesis has revealed is that two of the core elements of Bebbington's quadrilateral and of the primary truths delimited within the CTC have been appropriated by Manobo Christians and seriously modified. Manobo Christians would own the moniker 'evangelical' and subscribe to the authority of the Bible and the importance of the death of Christ. However, as this study has made plain, the doctrine of biblical authority has been made to function beyond simply "governing our belief and our behaviour" as stated above from the CTC. Also, Manobo Christians' theology of the death of Christ resembles more closely an "exemplarist" theory than one of penal substitution; a concept that most evangelicals would be uncomfortable with given its closer affinity to liberal theologies (chapter six, n. 607)

It is this author's opinion that evangelicals' essentialist position on the need for specific, perhaps even rigid, interpretations of certain doctrinal norms when crossing cultural boundaries throws up a couple of important issues. Firstly, it reflects a degree of inability to understand Christianity as cultural. Evangelical attachment to a "husk/kernel" type paradigm of contextualisation, as described above, implies that separating what is religious from what is cultural is a relatively straightforward process. However, as Cannell points out, this is a Christian way of thinking and can be meaningless within many other systems of thought.[669] Also, as Howell makes clear there are important distinctions between contextualisation and

[668] Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 39.
[669] Fenella Cannell, "Introduction to the Anthropology of Christianity," ed. Fenella Cannell (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006), 26.

localisation. The former is operational when cultural forms are resignified with Christian meanings. Localisation, which is what preoccupies us within World Christianity, is when locality is actually created through the practice of Christianity (chapter one, page 9). Manobo Christians have maintained their evangelical identity along with their fidelity to biblical authority and the centrality of the death of Christ, but their creation of new cultural space that is authentically Manobo, has pressed new functions and new interpretations from these core evangelical doctrines.

Secondly, it is a luxury that is afforded those who reflect on the transmission of Christianity across cultures without paying sufficient attention to how ordinary indigenous readers are actually engaging with the biblical text. In writing this conclusion, this author consulted a volume by evangelical scholar Scott Moreau, which maps and assesses evangelical models of contextualisation.[670] The book reviews the opinions of a wide spectrum of evangelical scholars while confirming that evangelicals are generally agreed on scriptural authority as a mechanism for controlling the design of contextualising models and avoiding syncretism. The assumptions and values used in designing models are discussed, evaluations are made, and readers are presented with a number of contemporary models being used in different regions of the world. The book is essentially a reflection on the opinions of scholars and missionary practitioners with no space given to analysis of what is actually happening at community level when majority world readers engage with the Bible away from the watchful eye of missionary or formally trained, professional Christian leaders. This is slightly ironic if one assumes that majority world readers of the Bible is a desirable consequence of "good" contextualisation.

Like all Christian traditions, evangelical Christianity is marked by its distinctive doctrinal norms and practices and will continue to be so defined. Nevertheless, this

[670] A. Scott Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2012).

thesis demonstrates that Christians from a minority ethnic group in the southern Philippines, who self-identify as evangelical, are reading the Bible in ways that modify how these distinctives are conceived and interpreted. It would be stretching credulity to insist that this is an exception to the rule; this study posits the possibility that there are grassroots, evangelical communities across the world doing likewise. This thesis also suggests a possible future trajectory for those who reflect on and are involved in the cross-cultural transmission of evangelical Christianity. More studies like this one are necessary, which validate the cultural reality of Christianity and listen carefully to how ordinary readers connect with and interpret the Bible. Such studies would provide the opportunity for more precise understanding of how local Christianities are shaped and provide greater clarity in conversations around the role that exogenous workers might perform in a majority world context. More studies like this would, in turn, demand additional conversations around the delineation of evangelical distinctives. Leaders and theologians within evangelical bodies may continue to set forth the truths that unite global evangelicalism but an increased awareness of how indigenous peoples appropriate Christianity and read the Bible will make it increasingly difficult to be certain and/or exact about how those truths should be interpreted and lived out.

Appendix A: Interview Questions for Research

First thing to be established is if the interviewee can read or not. This would be decided beforehand so that they do not have to answer that question on record. If they cannot read then their initial questions would be the '1a' option listed below.

1. Do you have your own copy of the Bible?
   a. In what ways do you come to understand the Bible's message?

2. What translation of the Bible do you read?

3. How often do you read the Bible?

4. How do you choose where to read from in the Bible?

5. Do you listen to preaching on the radio?

6. Imagine an elderly Manobo visiting you from upriver. They do not understand anything about church or Christianity, but when they enter your house they see your Bible and ask, "What is that?" How would you answer them?

7. If they then said to you, "But we Manobo have our own *balaod*, our own *batasan*, which is sufficient for us," how would you answer them?

8. So what is the ongoing value of Manobo *batasan*? If there is still a place for it, what does that mean?

9. If the Bible is the Word of God, what does it teach us about the character of God? What is he like?

10. What does it teach us about how to live our lives? What must our character be?

11. Can you tell me any Bible passages which teach that?

12. What does the Bible teach us about how to relate to other people?

13. What does the Bible have to say about our problems in life?

14. Lots of Manobo say, “Kanami no Manobo, pobri koy!” (“We Manobo are poor.”) What is the teaching in the Bible that can help the person who is poor?

15. What can the Bible do for the person who is sick?

Appendix B: Scripture and Language Use by Manobo Bible Teachers

Table 2: Interviewees' Bible Translation Preferences for Personal Reading: All Respondents

Cebuano Bible Only	61%
Manobo Bible Only	7%
Cebuano and Manobo	7%
Cebuano and English	3%
Non-readers	21%

Table 3: Interviewees' Bible Translation Preferences for Personal Reading: Readers Only

Cebuano Bible Only	79%
Manobo Only	8%
Cebuano and Manobo	8%
Cebuano and English	4%

Table 4: Translation Preference According to Age

	Under 18	19-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	Over 55
Manobo	0	1	0	1	2	0
Cebuano	3	7	11	6	8	3
Cebuano & English	0	0	2	0	0	0
Cebuano & Manobo	0	1	0	0	2	0

Table 5: Translation Preference According to Levels of Formal Education

	No Formal Edu.	Elementary School	High School	College
Manobo	1	2	1	0
Cebuano	5	21	10	2
Cebuano & English	0	0	1	1
Cebuano & Manobo	1	1	1	0

Table 6: Translation Preference According to Gender

	Female	Male
Manobo	2	2
Cebuano	23	15
Cebuano & English	1	1
Cebuano & Manobo	1	2

Table 7: Translation Preference by MABCAM Zone

	Zone 1	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 6	Zone 7
Manobo	0	4	0	0	0
Cebuano	15	3	13	6	1
Cebuano & English	2	0	0	0	0
Cebuano & Manobo	1	2	0	0	0

Table 8: Configuration of Language Use by Preachers According to Level of Training

	No training	In-service training	Bible School Training	Seminary Training
Bible reading in Cebuano & preaching in Cebuano & Manobo	0	0	1	0
Bible reading in Cebuano & preaching in Cebuano	1	4	1	1
Bible reading in Cebuano & preaching in Manobo	3	7	4	0
Bible reading in Manobo & Cebuano & preaching in Manobo	0	1	0	0

Bible reading in Manobo & preaching in Manobo	0	1	0	0

Table 9: Configuration of Language Use by Preachers According to Zone

	Zone 1	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 6
Bible reading in Cebuano & preaching in Cebuano & Manobo	0	0	1	0
Bible reading in Cebuano & preaching in Cebuano	7	0	0	0
Bible reading in Cebuano & preaching in Manobo	3	5	3	3
Bible reading in Manobo & Cebuano & preaching in Manobo	0	1	0	0
Bible reading in Manobo & preaching in Manobo	0	1	0	0

Appendix C: Pauline texts used by Manobo Bible teachers

The following is a list of the texts from Pauline epistles, used in spoken messages by Manobo Bible teachers and accompanied by brief summaries of each message. These messages were recorded by the author during fieldwork in Mindanao, southern Philippines, and subsequently transcribed. The periods of data collection were October – December 2014 and February – April 2015.

Sermon 25—2 Corinthians 8:1-2.

These two verses were the basis for a sermon by the speaker on the Christian duty of giving. The introduction deals with Paul's reference to the generosity of the Macedonians as a way of spurring the Corinthians to give. The sermon elaborates on giving as a fruit of love, the importance of giving with joy and how generosity will always draw blessing from God to the giver.

Sermon 29—Colossians 2:6-10.

The focus of the sermon is on our "union with Christ" and the consequences of that. It means we must be prepared to suffer with him. We can only endure this suffering if we are "rooted" in Christ and if we "tighten" our faith, as we do with a belt. We must also beware we are not deceived by those who might encourage us to make use of traditional healers.

This message does make abstract application with expressions like "rooted in Christ," the need to "tighten our faith," and being "united with Christ" without much explanation as to what this might actually look like in practice. The more abstract concepts from verses 9-10 in the passage, concerning the "fullness of the deity" in Christ, what it means to be brought to "fullness" and what it means for

Christ to “lord over every power and authority” are treated very lightly and interpreted as meaning that because we are united with Christ his character should be ours; our union with him also means we will rise with him after death to eternal life.

Sermon 33—1 Timothy 6:6-10

The sermon focuses on being content, even in the midst of poverty.

Sermon 48—Romans 12:1-21

This is a straight exposition of the passage emphasising the need to serve in response to the mercy and salvation which we have received through Jesus Christ. The speaker expands on the exercise of the spiritual gifts listed by Paul. Though the entire chapter was read by the speaker at the beginning, exposition did not continue beyond verse 13.

Sermon 64—Philippians 4:5-7

The main point made by this speaker is that we need to ask God for everything we need. We all have things we worry about; we should give these things to God in prayer and trust him for what we need. He will not refuse anyone. Sometimes of course, he gives later what we want instantaneously, like being a leader. The speaker encouraged the congregation to be prepared to see the Lord give straight away; after all he is miraculous.

Sunday School 75—Romans 12:1-21

This was a long teaching session with multiple participation from the congregation. Individual members were assigned sections to read and comment on by the leader. The entire lesson was intensely practical with illustrations given by each participant,

backed up by the leader, on how the lifestyle and character outlined by Paul can be lived out within the Manobo context.

Sermon 76—1 Corinthians 10:33-11:1

The speaker announced the theme of the message as “Live for the salvation of others.” Christians had been chosen so that God would be praised through the salvation Christians received, therefore we are to be careful that we act for the salvation of others and not just be individualistic. By using 1 Corinthians 9:20-22 as a supporting text, the speaker pointed that as with Paul, we should live as those we live among in order to bring them to faith. Using stories and illustration the speaker exhorted hearers to have strategies for reaching people and that just being Christians who go to church was not good enough.

Sermon 78—Ephesians 4:31-32

The speaker entitles this message as “The New Life in Christ.” Emphasis was placed on the need to be done with hatred and anger and to have a blameless character that is gentle, good and does not use words that might hurt others.

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(10)_____, August, 1978
(11)_____, September, 1978
(12)Prayer Partner Letter from Missionary E, June 1984
(13)Prayer Partner Letter from Missionary F, April 1977
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